

# VISION

Eastern Europe



Milan Knizak



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VISION











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# VISION

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# real social realism

ART IS A POETIC RECORD OF THE CULTURE, AND PEOPLE UNDERSTAND the culture of the past by studying the art and products of past civilizations. The development of technology in the 20th century has speeded up time; this creates rapid changes in the atmosphere of society and in art. It is now possible to find in art accurate records of the very recent past, encompassing the style of a particular region of the world. In this way, Andy Warhol—a personality and producer of a body of work emphasizing mass-production, and repetition—exemplifies the United States of the 1960s, an era we can now recognize as different from today.

Conceptual art, an art of the '70s, as it was developed in America, was a reaction against the materialism of the '60s, and records our country's swing away from that frame of mind. Intelligent people in America, and in the world, have become less oriented to personal goods and more aware of the frailty of our world.

We can now see the world from a distance, from the moon in photographs, which gives us a new sense of scale. To be able to see in one picture one-half of our world affects our consciousness in the same way that we were affected by Copernicus when he brought it to our attention that the earth moves around the sun. We began 500 years ago to question that we were made in the image of God when we realized we might not be the center of the universe. Now, we know we are not. Our world seems to get smaller and smaller.

The artist spends his time taking in information. The artist spends more time looking and listening than the layman, and is a trained observer, a private investigator. The artist translates what he sees around him into a form, which in turn becomes part of the culture it defines. The work of art communicates for the artist his intelligence through the visual craftsmanship of the activity or the object. The work of art is not the object; the work of art is the information that is communicated, a stimulating experience that awakens the intellect through the senses.

Since the end of the 1960s, many artists, not only in America but all over the world, have begun to develop an art of theory, of aesthetic activity, of proposition and study as the form, rather than the production of objects as the aim and purpose of the art.

This art is very strong in Eastern Europe in relationship to object-oriented art, although its development there seems to be for different reasons than its development in the west.

To varying degrees in Eastern European countries the political system, through the control of money, does not allow the manipulation of the art object as a product that can be merchandized and re-sold, increasing in value and fitting into a supply and demand system. So the art object is automatically less important than in the west. And since the making of art objects is scrutinized and often controlled by political forces, an artist who wishes to explore philosophic ideas may be more free to do so in making actions. These may not be understood by those enforcing repressive political ideas, yet the point will be made to the art community, and so, perhaps, find its way into the culture.

The fact that conceptual art is strong in Eastern Europe as well as in the west shows how small the world has become. The individual works being done by artists show how clearly their culture differs from other cultures in the world.





## YUGOSLAVIA

IN 1973 AT THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL IN SCOTLAND, Richard Demarco organized an exhibition of Yugoslavian art. This was the first time I became aware of any real art scene in Eastern Europe. On one special day in the gymnasium of the school being used for all the art shows (Joseph Beuys gave a 12-hour lecture in this room the next day), a group of Yugoslavian artists made actions together, all at the same time, but all independent of each other.

Gergelj Urkom upholstered a chair, by cutting up his shirt and tacking it to the chair.

Rasa Todosijevic painted his left ear and the leaves of a potted plant, while his wife held up a sign reading, "Decision as Art."

Nesa Paripovic, who always photographs the back of his own head, made a film of the other artists' activities, always keeping his back to the audience.

The strongest action going on was by Marina Abramovic. She placed her hand on the floor with the fingers spread as far as they would go. Then she began to jab a knife between her fingers, sticking it into the floor with a regular, fast, rhythmic rate. Each time she would miss and stick one of her fingers it would bleed, and she would then quickly pick up another kitchen knife from a row laid out on the floor and begin again without losing the rhythm. She did this until she had gone through all the knives, about seventeen.

The most fascinating thing about all this activity was that it was like a three-ring circus, acts going on simultaneously, each act with a singular character.

### Belgrade

The hot water is on the right faucet, the cold on the left. The hotels have mirrors in them, every time you turn around another mirror. I was surprised to see people walking down the street eating corn on the cob. Men have small stoves, the kind for cooking chestnuts, to cook corn on the cob almost black.

There is a personality, an unusual character, who lives outside Belgrade on a farm. He has changed his name to Harry Jackson, the most American name he could come up with. It's in the phone book and looks totally out of place among the slavic names. He doesn't speak English, and has never been to America, but he rides into Belgrade on horseback dressed in a complete cowboy outfit like Roy Rogers.

There are two interesting museums: A War Museum that is immense. It is surrounded by tanks, guns from both world wars. Inside it begins with the earliest wars—with the Turks—showing all the weapons and armor. In each room there is a history of war, through the second world war, every weapon, every uniform, pieces of shrapnel, photographs, maps, everything. And a museum of the concentration camps (not actually where they were) with grim objects, drawings and small photos that belonged to the prisoners. One very powerful object inside a glass case was a human bone wrapped with a piece of rusted wire and a small piece of cloth, like a sculpture. It brought on a strong emotional feeling like no other object I have ever seen.

The old concentration camps are mostly used by the academic abstract painters as their living quarters and studios; it looks something like an art school around there.

The official art of Yugoslavia is abstract art, as it is in most of the western world. I remember Nelson Rockefeller saying on a TV special that the great thing about abstract art is that you can see anything you want in it. In Yugoslavia abstract art is no threat to the government; since its content is not known it couldn't be critical of the society. By official art I mean paintings and sculptures that are purchased by government-run museums, or the art of artists to whom special favors or allowances are given.

Mica Popovic, a man about fifty, made an important political statement two or three years ago in Belgrade. He had been painting portraits for some time. For this show he painted ex-art and -theater critics who had been denounced because of their criticism of the government. These portraits were painted in all black and white and grey, and in each painting the subject was holding an umbrella. Popovic had an exhibition in an





official gallery and showed these portraits, along with a photo-realist-style painting that he had copied from the Sunday paper. This was of a color photograph of the queen of Holland posed with President Tito, who was wearing gold rings, gold medals, and looking very fat and rich. This was an exact copy, in color, of the photo used in the newspaper. The day this show opened, the government closed it without explanation.

Last year the Museum of Modern Art in Belgrade opened a Salon, a gallery in the city, away from the museum. The museum is on the outskirts of town, on the Danube River, and stands alone with no other buildings near it. The city is proud of its modern museum, but I don't think very many people visit it. At least the two times I was there, no other people were in it except employees.

The Salon, run by Irina Subotic, presents exhibitions of conservative modern art to keep the officials of the museum happy, so that she can organize a few more contemporary shows. In September she organized, in collaboration with an avant-garde theater, a series of performances in the gallery and exhibitions in the theater, with a discussion on the influences of theater on the plastic arts and vice versa.

There is a high level of social life among the art community in Belgrade. There are many discussions, lectures, art-film and theater festivals organized every year. The artists travel more and meet with each other more than in other places I have seen in Europe. There is great communication and political awareness among artists.

The main gallery of contemporary art in Belgrade is the Student Culture Center, located near the center of town in an old police building that was obtained during a student revolt in 1968. It has a theater, a lounge that serves turkish coffee and soft drinks, lecture halls, a book store, a library and a gallery. The gallery, which shows mostly conceptual art, is run by Dunja Blazevic and Biljana Tomic. Each April they have an art festival called the "April Meeting," and artists are invited from all over Europe to participate in the activities.

My first visit to Yugoslavia, in 1974, was to perform an action for the "April Meeting." At that time I renewed my friendship with several of the artists I had met in Edinburgh the year before.

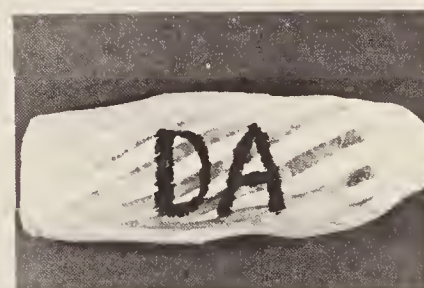
Marina Abramovic presented an action for the "April Meeting." After cutting her hair off, she lay inside a five-pointed flaming red star, with her head, arms and legs in each of the points. She passed out from the intense heat and had to be taken home. Marina is a 29-year-old instructor in an art school. She lives with her mother (who is curator of the academic museum in Belgrade) and her grandmother. Many of her works have a feminist orientation relating to imprisonment and bleeding. Gina Pane (French) and Valie Export (Austrian) are two other important women artists who deal with similar ideas.

Rasa Todosijevic, who had been at Edinburgh, seemed to me on this trip to be the most alive artist I encountered, and the most positive. We were walking down the street, and a goddess of a woman passed us; Rasa said that her walk was more important than the whole of twentieth-century art. In 1972 Rasa Todosijevic painted the word DA (YES) on a loaf of bread and sent out photo postcards of it. He calls his work "Homo Art"; he predicts that creativity "will become a biological characteristic of the species and not only of the gifted individual."

Gergelj Urkom was in Belgrade for the "April Meeting," but only as a visitor. He has moved to London, England, where he works in a toy factory. However, he was an influence in the development of Yugoslavian conceptual art. An important work was done in 1971 at the Student Culture Center. The gallery's policy is to provide materials for an artist's exhibition. Gergelj Urkom was in need at the time of two blankets. So the gallery purchased the blankets; he exhibited them, folded, in the gallery. Afterwards he used them to keep warm in his home.

Another artist who has left Yugoslavia is Radamir Damnjan, who now lives in Italy. In an exhibition in 1973 he sat at a table and stamped pieces of paper "FREE ART WORK," then passed them out. Also in that year he sent out cards with a picture of his friends all standing in a row, with the name of a famous artist over each person. This work was titled "Misinformation."

Zoran Popovic is back in Yugoslavia now, after spending a year in New York in Joseph Kosuth's studio. He became influenced by the language





art movement, wrote an article for *The Fox Magazine*. He now works only with language. Before he went to New York he was making dance-like gestures with small lights attached to his fingertips, and in a darkened room could make forms by moving his arms, drawing in space.

I noticed in Yugoslavia, as in the rest of Europe and in America, there is a good deal of exhibition of conceptual art documentation. The way it is displayed in Belgrade is that the photos, usually enlargements taken from magazines, are sandwiched between two pieces of glass and wrapped with string on both sides to hold them together. Then they are hung from the mouldings by strings, like paintings. So when you enter two different galleries it looks like the same show from a distance.

Even today a lot of people all over the world think conceptual art is documentation: photos, text about activity, maps, diagrams, etc., hung on the wall like so many paintings. This kind of thing makes information about works accessible to many people because it can be easily reproduced, but it shouldn't be confused with the work.

In the beginning, the photo documentations were deliberately unprofessional, to try to avoid the confusion that it might be a photography exhibition. (A few years ago someone I know visited New York and I asked him if he saw any interesting shows there. He told me that he saw a good show by a Dutch photographer named Jan Dibbets.)

Another thing about Belgrade: it is a big film city. Tito is a movie buff; he has invited American movie stars to his house to entertain them. You can see film sets of concentration camps, and American cowboy towns (they use Turks as Indians). Belgrade is the Hollywood of East Europe.

It has been completely re-built since its destruction during the war, very ordinary functional architecture, very ugly city.

## Zagreb

Zagreb was not destroyed during the war, and is smaller, close to the Austrian border. It is very much like a small Vienna, very beautiful.

There is an Academy of Art, a Culture Center with a gallery that organizes, among others, exhibitions of conceptual art.

There is an important gallery known in western Europe, called the Gallery of Contemporary Art.

There is also a group of artists working collectively to make public art, for example transparent plexiglass garbage receptacles they place on street corners to encourage people into ecological awareness—not a known phenomenon yet in eastern Europe.

From a westerner's point of view the best-known Yugoslavian artist, Braco Dimitrijevic, lives in Zagreb.

Braco Dimitrijevic told me he thinks Yugoslavia should be considered part of the Mediterranean area, and not part of the Eastern bloc. Yet Braco's work strongly reflects the socialist culture of his society. It is, to me, the perfect example of social realism.

His series of works, "Casual passer-by I met at 11:40 a.m., Zagreb, 1969," is an example. Ordinary people he meets on the street completely by chance are selected by him to be made the subject of his work. He will put them on magazine covers, or make their names or faces prominent in a public place. A large photo blow-up, approximately 15 feet high, of a casual passer-by was hung on the outside of a public building in Dusseldorf, 1972. A similar work involved three persons he met in 1971 in Zagreb. These photo blow-ups were hung on the outside of a building, as they often hang photos of Lenin, Marx and Engels. In 1974 Braco Dimitrijevic gave a cocktail party for a casual passer-by in the Student Culture Center.

For an artist living in Eastern Europe, where there is practically no support system at all for contemporary artists, it was a logical conclusion to come to that Fame is only a matter of being in the right place at the right time.



Braco Dimitrijević

Once upon a time, far from cities and towns, there lived two painters. One day the king, hunting nearby, lost his dog. He found him in the garden of one of the two painters. He saw the works of that painter and took him to the castle.

The name of the painter was Leonardo da Vinci. The name of the other disappeared forever from human memory.



## HUNGARY

I TOOK THE TRAIN TO BUDAPEST AND GOT THERE IN THE morning. I asked this young guy where I could change my money, and if he could show me. So we went outside with my bags and got in his car and drove to the other side of town. I was getting worried that I'd made a mistake; he explained to me that he would give me the same rate of exchange that the bank would (and it turns out he did), but we had to go to his house to get the money. We drove to a part of town that looked like a big city slum, and I waited in the car thinking any minute someone would come out and beat me up. But he returned, changed my money (it was only \$20), and drove me back to the center of town. We drove through the industrial part of Budapest. It seemed very much like I imagine Moscow is like—old, sooty buildings, high, odd-looking dump trucks, lots of workers on the street all wearing the same clothes. It was the middle of the morning; my acquaintance explained that the workers were changing shifts.

I was dropped off at a hotel, and after going to several hotels I found out there were no rooms available anywhere, because of East German tourists. I called Gabor Attalai, an artist I knew about, and he invited me to come over that evening. So I decided to look around Budapest that day, see him, then take a late-night train to Czechoslovakia.

In Budapest the buildings are all large-scale and old, very old, like a story book. Everything is oversized. Lots of sidewalk cafés. Wine is expensive, but the price of bread hasn't gone up in 25 years, only a few pennies a loaf. People in other Eastern European countries can understand each other's languages, but Hungarian is totally different. In Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland German seems to be the second language. Everyone must learn Russian in school.

Gabor Attalai spoke English. He lives in a modern apartment like one in the United States—T.V., hi-fi, bookshelves, modern furniture. He was very interested in hearing about American art and the system for buying and selling art in the U.S. He told me that since the Hungarians and the Czechoslovakians resisted when the Russians took over, they now have less freedom than the Poles, who only passively resisted. Official art is art that glorifies work; any art that suggests fantasy or that criticizes the state is not tolerated.

So Hungarian artists meet secretly to exhibit and see work, in a kind of speakeasy, which they call (among themselves) the Young Artists' Club Gallery.

Gabor Attalai has made many works and actions that represent a kind of frustration and stopping of information: a suffocation piece called "In Isolation. When a man cannot get or give information." In this work his eyes were bandaged, his mouth and his nose, his fingertips, all were bandaged.

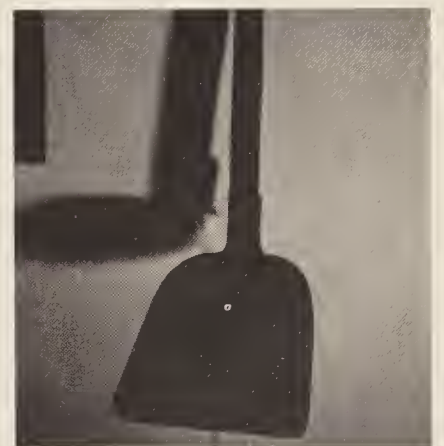
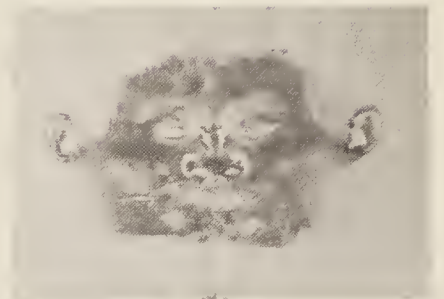
When I saw Attalai he was doing a series of common everyday objects which he called Red-y-mades, and painted red. He had also been making prints of his face and feet by painting them and pressing them onto paper. He would press the paper onto his face the way you make fingerprints, rolling from left to right. The impressions were animal-like, like the head and feet of some kind of beast.

I asked Attalai about other interesting artists in Hungary and he suggested I contact Visy Laszlo, who sent me the following description of a work done in 1974:

Soil was put in a flower pot, 15 to 20 grains of wheat on it, and again a layer of soil 2 cc. thick. This was covered with a layer of bitumen with .07-1 cc. thickness. The watering of the flowerpot was made from below. Till now not one single plant broke through the layer of bitumen.

This experiment suggests the stopping of growth, which relates to the government's oppression of the people in a very abstract way. It's a secret language among artists, like the secret language in the lyrics of rock music of the '60s, which made references to drugs that were only understood by a hip young generation.

Before I left Gabor Attalai he told me the story of Jan Mlcoch, a Czechoslovakian artist who came to Budapest to make an exhibition in the Young Artists' Club. Mlcoch bandaged his chest with bandages and put a layer of dirt between his body and the bandages. Inside the dirt were earthworms, and he had a small tube that went down into the earth. He





could put water in there to keep the earth moist so the worms would stay alive. He brought these worms from Prague on the train to Budapest. When he got to the gallery he took his shirt off and unwrapped the bandages and exposed the dirt and the worms, as his action for this exhibition. What excited Attalai about this action was that this man had brought a piece of the Czechoslovakian earth and its animals across the border with no papers or passports or permission to transport them.

## CZECHOSLOVAKIA

WHEN I GOT TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA I MET JAN MLCOCH, AND I told him how Attalai had described the piece he did in Budapest. He laughed, and said that the Hungarians are very politically oriented, and they would see the work as being full of intrigue and mystery. As far as he was concerned, the work was about his relationship with the worms.

But to me how the work was transported was very interesting. I also see what Attalai had seen in the work. Usually an artist makes works by instinct, and sometimes he only fully understands his own work after some time, or after someone else points something out to him. This has happened to me in my work.

Mlcoch sees himself as a kind of St. Francis, communing with the land and the animals. He has done other works that involve such communion. One was called "Washing"; "I washed my body and my hair in presence of my friends." Another was the discovering of a head of cabbage, with his feet feeling the cabbage, tearing it apart, learning about the cabbage with his feet. This action was performed in an abandoned cloister, which seems to be the only place, along with Petr Stembera's attic, where these artists can make their actions for their friends.

Petr Stembera is well known in the conceptual art world in Europe. His most interesting work for me was the transplanting of a twig onto his arm. He cut his arm and taped a small twig to the cut, wrapping it up in straw. Another work he did (in 1971) was the transposition of two stones. He carried the stones from one place to another in a basket-like sack on his back.

Petr Stembera keeps in touch with artists all over the world by mail. He writes on art and maintains a library of catalogues. He has a great hunger for information on works of art. He works in the museum library in Prague and is a *gentil* and generous person.

Another artist who is a friend of Petr Stembera is Karel Miller. He makes Zen-like actions, very simple discoveries. In a work by Karel Miller called "The Wastepaper," he collected a small pile of trash from the street. He did another action called "The Touch" in which he touched the surface of small metal sewer lids in the street. Another one was called "Discovering of the River," where he felt the ground until he came to the water. His actions are beautifully simple.

Karel Miller and Petr Stembera collaborated in a work for an exhibition in 1974 in Yugoslavia. For that exhibition Petr Stembera wrote the following statement:

Our collaboration consist in resembling thinking, but our works there are distinct enough. Both we give preference (priority) to experience and activity over pure conceptualism, and our works meet temporary in the point of polarities. But while for Karl Miller the polarities there are one of main problems, the main problem for me there is the experience and realization of my body in three different ways: A. Activities; B. Passivities: Exercise of the will and body; C. Ascetical Pieces.

An artist older the Mlcoch, Miller and Stembera is Milan Knizak. He was involved in the first Happenings in Europe, and in the '60s visited Kaprow in New York. In 1971 Knizak produced a book called *Zeremonien*, published by Vice-Versand, German publishers of conceptual art works. The cover of this issue of *Vision* is the image from the endpapers of that book.

The book was discovered by Czechoslovakian authorities in the luggage of a German collector in a border search, and Knizak was arrested and sent to jail. A letter was sent out to the contemporary art world asking for petitions of support for Knizak to be sent to the Czech government. I don't know if the petitions helped, but he is out of jail now. In answer to my request for photos of new work he wrote, "I'm sorry I can't send any







new photos right now, maybe later. Now I'm working on global architecture problems." See Petr Stembera's article, page 42, for more about Milan Knizak.

When I was in Yugoslavia I met the curator, Mr. Zemina, of the Museum of Art in Prague. He was in Yugoslavia on an exchange program. He gave me one name that turned out to be interesting. Milan Grygar has been making, since 1968, "acoustic drawings" with objects that make noise, very much in the John Cage tradition. I visited his studio with several artists and Jindrick Chalupicky, who is a friend and photographer of the conceptual artists; he acted as translator for me in Prague.

Two of Milan Grygar's works are illustrated in *Vision*. "Homage to Magic" was performed in Poland, at the Museum of Art in Lodz. It included mechanical birds walking around on a piece of paper after having their feet dipped in ink; these made trackings around a top hat placed on a table like a magician's stand. Another work, done in 1973, was a tactile drawing. Grygar sat behind a large sheet of paper that had holes cut in it, his arms extending through the holes. He exchanged a bucket of paint from hand to hand, reaching into the bucket with the opposite hand and making markings on the paper in a groping manner.

Grygar also makes scores for music that are visual scores, grid patterns, to be interpreted by the musician.

There was a good gallery in Prague before the Russians took over that showed Beuys, the Gutai artists and other far out art. In the late sixties the Russians closed the gallery and they put the director in jail. His name is Jindrich Chalupicky.

A few things about Prague: I noticed that in the train station there weren't any seats to sit down on. They had a small waiting room which was for people traveling first class; otherwise, there weren't any benches, not anywhere in the train station. People were just kind of standing around.

Another thing I noticed, the beer in Czechoslovakia is really good, the best.

The only car made in Czechoslovakia comes only in black. Generally, all the people's clothes are black or grey or brown. The only bright color you ever see is red.





## POLAND

WARSAW LOOKS OLD, BUT THE OLD TOWN HAS BEEN COM-pletely re-built since the war. It has been done with great care and crafts-manship, working from old plans and photographs, and every detail is as it was before the war. But I had the feeling of being in a movie set.

I was walking down the street in Warsaw and a man came up to me and said, "Change money." There are specialty shops that sell foreign goods, and they only accept dollars. But it is illegal for Poles to have dollars. At the border I had to show the officials all my money, any kind of money I had, and when I left all that money had to be accounted for. I had to change \$10 a day at the border, before entering, for the length of time on my visa, ten days.

The food is mostly overcooked, and the main dish usually consists of ground meat made into patties called "cutlets." The only salad you can get is cabbage. Three out of five days a week they are out of beer and wine in restaurants (and the beer is the worst).

Poland is the most disorganized country I visited on this trip. There is no spirit of competition. A waiter in a restaurant sent us away at the door saying, "We only have chicken and it's not very good." He is paid by the state whether he works well or not. If he changes jobs he makes the same money in the other job.

Everyone works in Poland; there is no unemployment. Most people make about \$200 a month. Perhaps this buys more there than \$200 buys here (rent and food are cheaper, clothes and goods are not), but even if it bought twice as much, you can see that the general standard of living is about what people on unemployment have here.

To own a car represents years of saving, and anyone who has one thinks of himself as superior. In the city cars have the right-of-way over pedes-trians or anything else, but in the country a car is less imposing. The traf-fic repeatedly gets hung up behind the many horse-drawn carts on the narrow roads.

It takes days to get permission to do things. The bureaucracy is so thick that communists from the west have changed to capitalism after visiting Poland. The Russians are accepted in a melancholy way. They run the show.

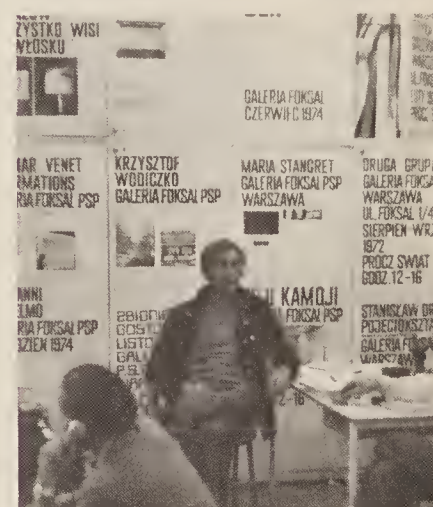
Wieslaw Borowski, who runs the Foksal Gallery in Warsaw, told me a "Russian story" in which the Czar, at the end of the 19th century, wanted to make a railroad from Moscow to Leningrad. He drew a line on the map, and his finger was in the way of the ruler so that at one point there was a little bump in the line. The engineers built the railroad exactly in a straight line from Moscow even if they had to move mountains and tear down im-portant buildings, but when they came to the bump on the map the tracks circled out in an arc, then went back to becoming a straight line again.

This story was told to illustrate a Russian-totalitarian mentality, but it seems to me to be a mentality now (discontentedly) shared by the Poles. Polish artists have more cultural freedom than the Czechs and Hungar-ians because of their relatively passive position towards their oppressors. But they also have less creative spirit. It's a hell of a thing to say after only a ten-day visit to Poland. But it looked to me like most of the art is a repe-tition of ideas of other very recent art outside the country, sometimes de-liberately and sometimes without the knowledge of ground that has al-ready been covered. There aren't many artists whose work has a distinct Polish character. None of the art seems to have a political content. There's no real competition. There are at least half a dozen galleries that show exclusively conceptual art. The state wants to look modern, so it allows very modern art, even though it doesn't support it.

A passage from James Joyce's *Ulysses*, quoted by a Polish artist, Zbig-niew Gostomski, in a catalog, seems to sum up the Polish attitude:

To reflect that each one who enters imagines himself to be the first to enter whereas he is always the last term of a preceding series even if the first term of a succeeding one, each imagining himself to be first, last, only and alone, whereas he is neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity.

Gostomski has an exhibition every year at the Foksal Gallery, a very good gallery which brings artists from Western Europe and other Eastern European countries for exhibitions. Gostomski works with numbers and





systems. He spent some time in New York last year. His work has a philosophic nature and is influenced by Mel Bochner and Sol LeWitt.

Another Polish artist working with numbers is known in New York, as he had a show at the John Weber Gallery last year. Roman Opalka dates all his paintings 1965- $\infty$ , since he did his first number painting in 1965 and has committed himself to keep on doing them until infinity. He conceives of each painting as a fragment of the larger work—numbers in succession, each fragment picking up where the previous one left off.

One of Poland's best known artists is a woman named Natalia Lach-Lachowicz. Her work is very much influenced by traditional body art gestures from the west. She is doing a series of works called "Consumer Art," where she eats bananas and other phallic-shaped foods.

As far as I can see, the most interesting visual artists in Poland are twin brothers, Wacław and Lasław Janiccy. They do actions together, and they're also part of a group with a third person, Lestow Stokłosa, called the Druga Grupa. The twin brothers work together in trick situations. They made a film without a sound track; they add the sound in live presentation.

An exhibition of the Druga Grupa in the Foksal Gallery in 1973 was an environment of sand and dirt. Hidden inside the glass were gemstones (made of glass). The public was invited to sift the sand to find the treasure. A uniformed guard was part of the exhibition.

The Druga Grupa has also produced and packaged their own oil paint in tubes, in special colors. These were sold, and as they were used they to some extent dictated the look of the paintings done with them.

As far as the Poles are concerned, the most important artist in Poland is not a visual artist but a theater producer. His theater works are visually-oriented, and he has a close association with visual artists, many of whom act in his productions. He designs his own costumes and own props and elements in the theater, and many of the objects that he uses are sculpture works that he has exhibited in galleries and museums.

But his art is theater, and he believes "the theater is above all art." The real content Tadeusz Kantor's life-art is the fact of his Director-Conductor position in his work. He did a very revealing work, "The Conducting of the Sea from a Chair" on the beach. He moves inside his productions as if he were an invisible man of the future pulling all the strings of the action of his fantasy world. Kantor wrote, "We say, 'to act a part.' But 'acting' is neither a reproduction nor reality itself. It is something between reality and illusion." To me, visual art is either reality (sculpture) or illusion (painting). Theater is, truly, something else—a collection of all the other arts. The members of that profession often borrow ideas from the visual arts, changing them into something else—and at the same time often make them accessible to the general public, so putting them into the popular culture.

One reason Kantor is so important in Poland is that during the war when the Nazis occupied the country he was making underground theater about fascism. He was also very much of a pioneer in the days of the happenings.

Every day he gets a massage and he has a French lesson. These two things are very important to him, before anything else.



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ARTISTS SOMETIMES TALK ABOUT A "DEMOCRATIC" POSITION. It is usually in opposition to an "elitist" position. It is accessible to, easily understood by, "the people."

On my trip to Eastern Europe it became clear to me that an artist who attempts to make art to reach "the people" is making self-conscious art; he is like a politician trying to get votes.

But an artist who makes art to express the essence of his culture often produces a work of art so complex or so unusual in form that its subtleties of craftsmanship are only received by other artists—sometimes only by other artists within the same specialized area, as color-field painting, or



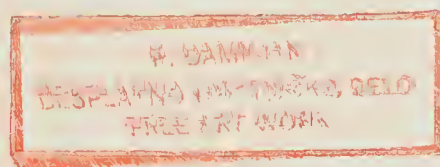
performance sculpture, or language art. Then later that work, the surface look of it, is translated and simplified and brought to the attention of the general public through fashion, film, T.V., advertising, writers of popular culture, etc. In this way the public "sees" the work of an artist, sometimes years after its conception. It looks as if the artist was ahead of his time, able to see into the future. But in reality he was only observing and reporting a state of mind which already existed, but which had not yet been understood as a philosophic position, as a comment worth listening to.

Many young artists in the U.S. feel that they are taking a radical position by "no value judgment" placed on art "of the people, by the people and for the people."

But "people's art" is the official position in Eastern Europe, and an examination of the work of artists there has convinced me that now, not only in Eastern Europe but here as well, the elitist position is the radical one.



# Yugoslavia





# Radomir Damnjan

The latest cycle of Damnjan's paintings, displayed in May 1970, in the Gallery of the Museum of Contemporary Art, represented that utmost point he could have reached moving in a direction of continual reduction of pictorial expressive locution components, that is, in the "minimal" organization of those paintings a possibility was already indicated of transiting from a visual to a mental perplexity, to be fully realized in a series of drawings created at the end of the same year. During his stay in the United States and on his return to Belgrade, Damnjan continued to develop opened issues which he finally defined during 1972 in two thematically independent series of drawings.

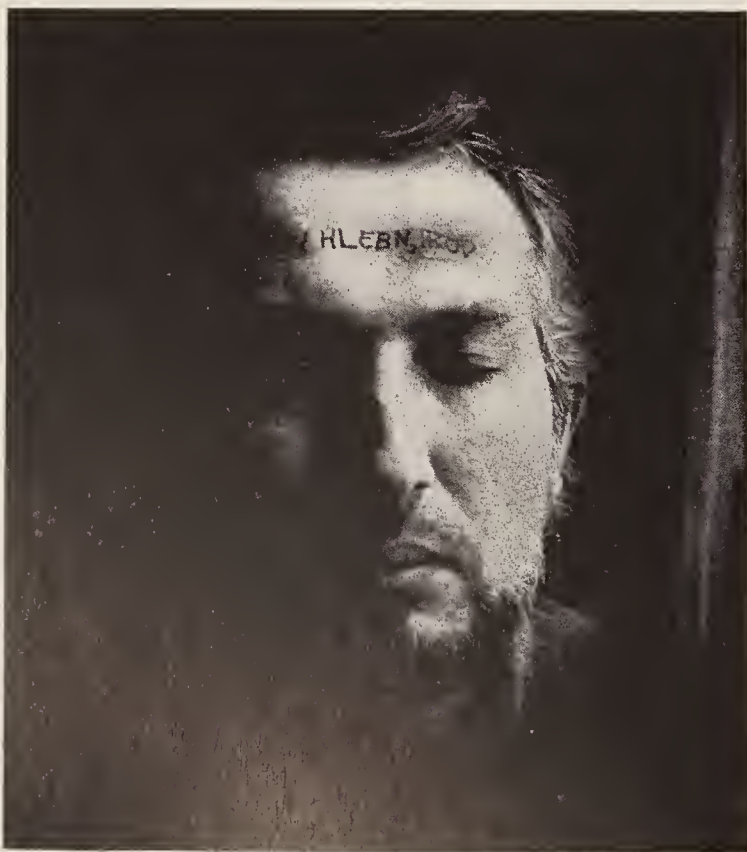
The main characteristic of these new works primarily consists in the changed mode of formulating a definite artistic idea; instead of engaging in the construction of form or in the shaping of an image, which in itself belongs to the sphere of visual perception, Damnjan is striving to establish a communication by means of words, the reading of which would direct the spectators attention to the possibility of pure abstract thought of the suggested idea. So, in the first series of drawings which he collected in the common subject matter called "A Proposition for a New Experience of Colour", Damnjan abandoned the arbitrary physical appearance of coloured qualities, so that he could, by their reduction to completely precise textual signs appeal to the spectator to engage in a process of pure conceivment of the nominated terms. In other words, giving up the material representation of the actual pigment of colour, he merely writes out or pronounces the words "blue", "white" and "grey", wanting to provoke in the spectator, by this interchange of subjective sensual experience by an objective lingual idea, an identical, if not an intensified effect, since each of us already possesses a clearly formed and preserved memory of the phenomenon of colour, regardless of the fact that our memory, is of course, determined by individual experience and knowledge. In order to be able to point out at the same time, the necessity of a provocation for such a mental approach to the factor of colour, Damnjan realized a series of drawings connected in the theme "Misinformation", calling the spectator to constantly re-examine the meaning which he discovers in a work of art, and pleading for a necessity of taking an active attitude towards the contents of each offered message.

While this first collection of drawings was concentrated on the subject matter, which, in spite of it's lack of any formative formulation, still belongs to the sphere of speculation on the nature of expressive terminology of plastic art, the second series of drawings, originated on a selection of various pictorial and lingual informations from the catalogue of the exhibition "Russian Avant — Garde 1903—1922" in New York in 1971—72 contains the authors reflection on social and political treatment of art in various definite and well known historical occasions. Damnjan's choice of the names Hlebnikov, Malevic, El Lissitzky, Puni, the Brothers Burljuk and others, is, of course, not accidental. He believes in the permanence of particular artistic, and primarily humane determinations, regardless of the situation that involves them in various moments, thus calling the spectator's attention to the need of an individual re-examination of a number of given facts and conclusions, and closely connected with this, to the necessity of forming new, freely chosen parameters of spiritual values.

Damnjan's method of outlining the vacant borders of the mentioned author's paintings and the writing of adequate texts from the catalogue, expresses, in the farthest consequence, a demand not only for a necessity of understanding but also for a necessity of active contemplation on the phenomenon we regard especially inspiring. For, before this decision to have the names of the mentioned artists separated from the context of the publication and in such a way make the public aware of them, they existed for Damnjan himself as mere facts from an inherited history of art. Now, however, with the motive of this personal choice, they become possible standards of behavior and thus receive a chance to be reflected in our contemporary reality as a living and effective presence.

The attitude that Damnjan takes in his new series of drawings doesn't surprise those who have been attentively following his work. Current artistic experiences have been adapted to the permanent qualities of his character which is distinguished by a very sensitive intellectuality, constantly demonstrated through the aspiration to have its expressive speech comprehended as a persistent "exercise in asceticism". This is primarily a distinction of those who among many solutions choose to accept only strict and radical ones.

Ješa Denegri



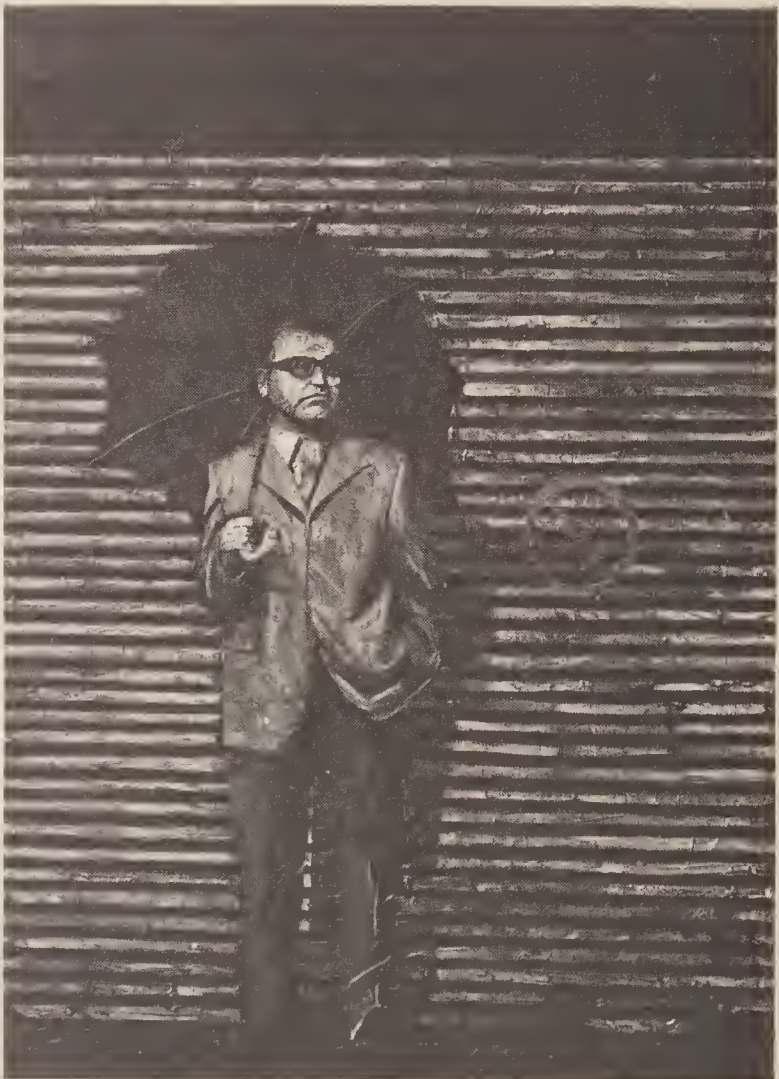
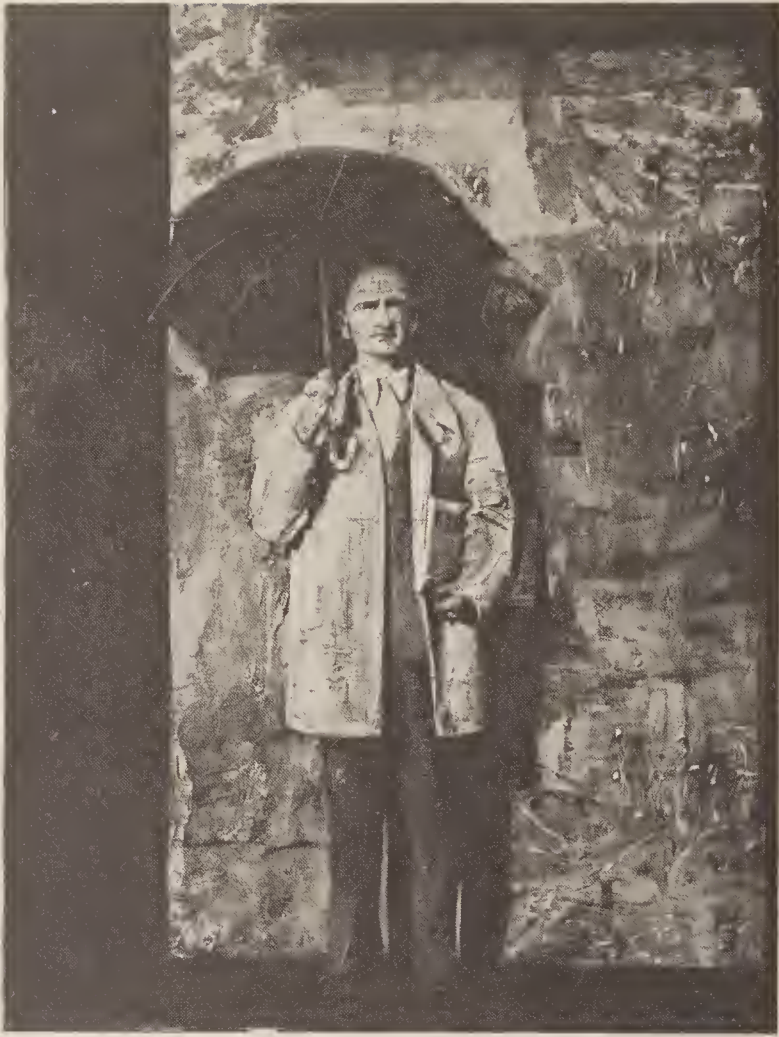
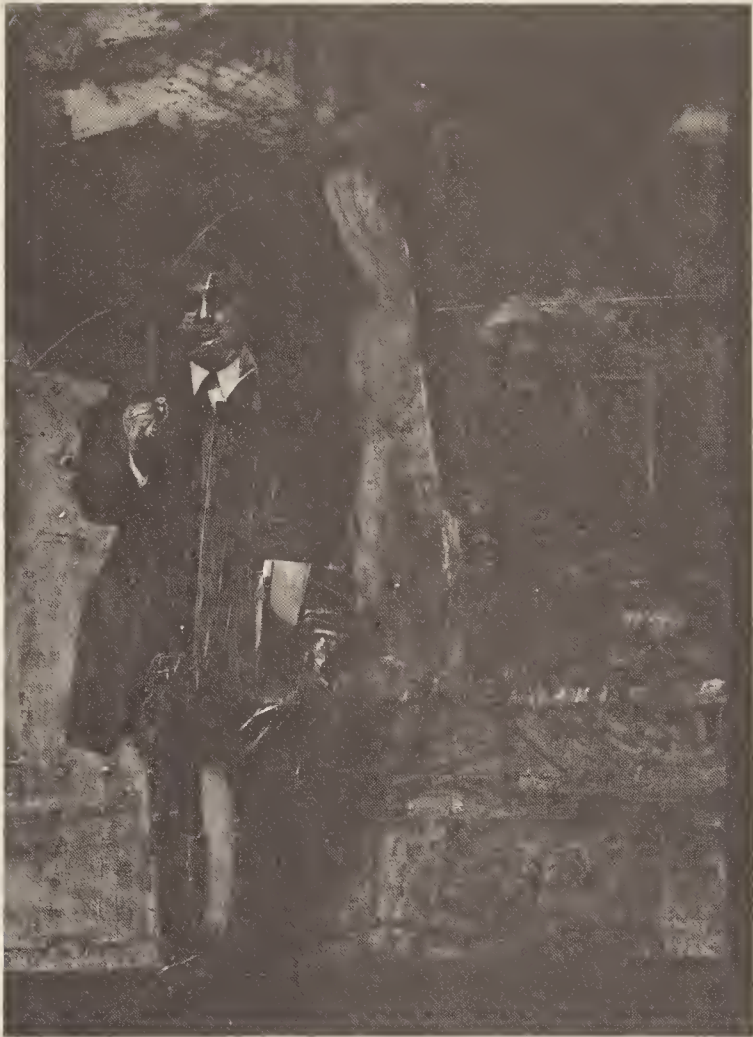




from left Daniel Buren, Susan Sontag, Joseph Beuys, Hanne Darboven, Sol Lewitt, Robert Ryman, Donald Judd



Mića Popović

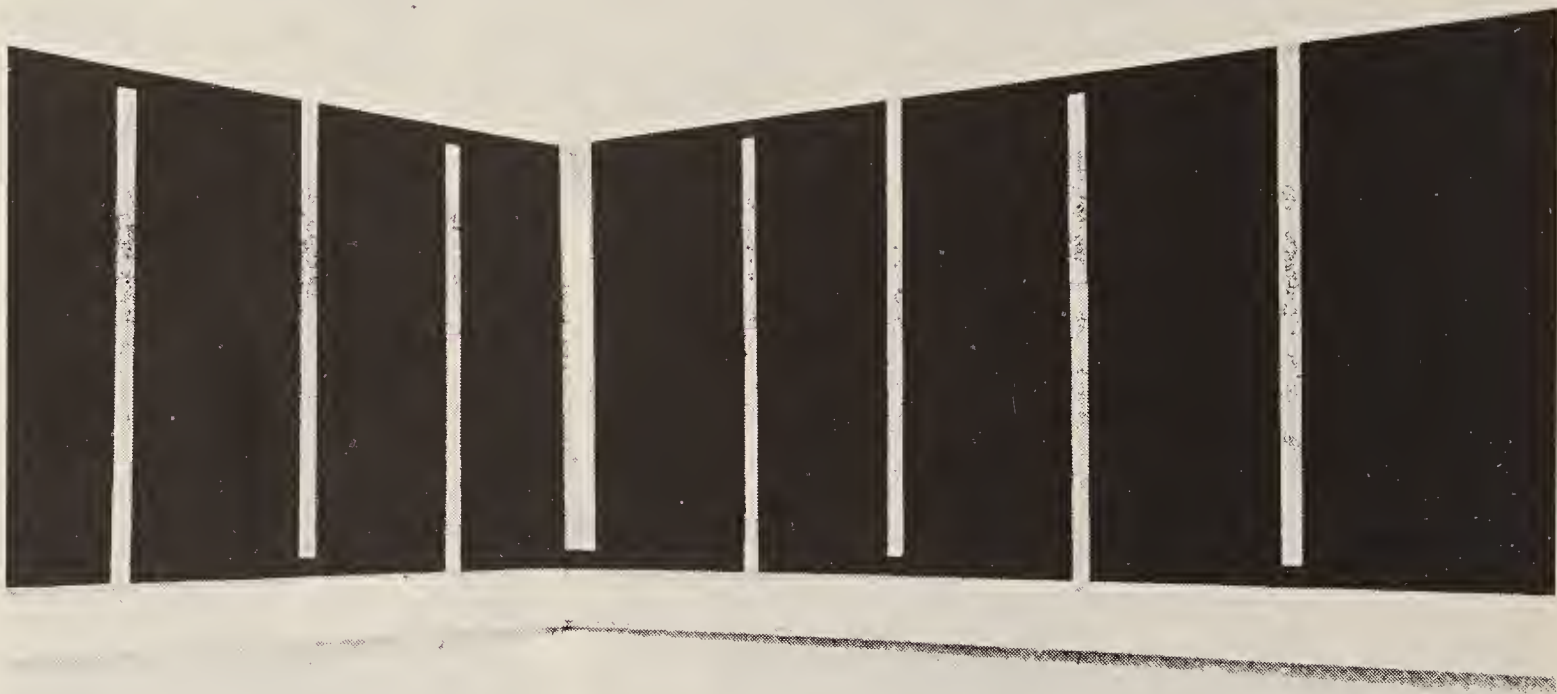






“TITO”





“MEANDER”  
1960

## Zoran Popović

It is generally believed that art is independent of ideology. This thesis has become the rule in our cultural public besides other things because of inherited (artistic) practice, the existing state-administrative bureaucracy, as well as the existing liberalism, which has gained ground among us in the past fifteen years. Due to the objective affirmation of technocracy, bureaucracy became its ally. Although technocracy is not in favour of ideology and therefore enters into an opposition against bureaucracy, the latter cannot stand technocracy to that degree which it is against knowledge. Nevertheless they are allied with each other in order to gain power, so that the minority can effectively rule over the majority, which is the basic condition of their existence. Since technocracy sees progress only perpetuated by a professional elite, it sees the possibility of revolutionary changes in art only if the elite is changed. Technocracy thus divides society (the cultural public) into the "elite" and the "masses," into active and passive ones, into those who govern and those who are being governed. By manipulating knowledge, technocracy has a monopoly over it and thus also over people. Owing to liberalism, which formally defends freedom, the power of technocracy is increasing, and technocracy, which has an arsenal of instruments provided by the bureaucracy, consolidates the opinion about "universal" aesthetic values which are inevitably needed for an effective activity of techno-liberalism in the world of art. The defence of these "universal" values of art is needed in order to uphold the opinion about the autonomy of art, its independence from the dictatorship of ideology, about its straightforward progress, which is nothing else but a projection of undialectical idealism. The "universal" values of art are the values of the conflictless spectacular art of the bourgeois consumer society based on the type of values of the petit bourgeoisie, due to the established balance of power. All this finally functions on behalf of the preservation of the hegemony of Western culture over world culture in line with tendencies of the late capitalism, and its imperialistic needs and aims. The artistic liberalistic technocracy is—on behalf of "irresistible progress" in art (society)—persistently against ideology, whereas it establishes the bourgeois ideology in practice.

The basis of the existence of bureaucracy proceeds from a complex distribution of labour and a corresponding hierarchy. Artists in Yugoslavia, and also elsewhere, consider their professional practice as something normal, as a consequence of which they see their position in the social distribution of labour in such a way that society should finance the artists with regard to their rank. The bureaucracy can then easily direct this isolated social group, because the group itself chose that place where it belongs.

The work of art, artistic activity, should include a new presumption on the level of an alternative, which would take a radical critical attitude regard-



ing the artistic practice so far; because of this transcending of the existing artistic conformity (the existing sociability)\*, in which formal changes took place, and in which one artistic context was exchanged for another whereas the establishment did not change, i.e., the establishment which essentially defines the functions of art, and functions of the artists. Therefore the politicization of art is unavoidable. Art must be negative, critical of the external world as well as its own language, its own artistic practice. It is absurd and hypocritical to be committed, to speak and act on behalf of the humanism of mankind, on behalf of political and economic freedom, and on the other hand to be passive in relation to the system of the "universal" values of art, i.e. to that system which provides the basic condition for the existence of the artistic bureaucracy and along with it for the unbelievable art-star plundering. As soon as the artistic bureaucracy gains power, it manipulates for the sake of its own reproduction and it always supports those phenomena which prolong its existence. In this way it directs and "arranges" artistic productivity and the relations of production. The bureaucracy creates an inert artist and a passive consumer of art, it creates "gaily tempered robots," with the help of its monopoly over information and education. Along with the mass of disoriented and disorganized artists and the uninformed customers, the power of the artistic bureaucracy (art historians, curators, gallery directors, officials at the secretariat of culture and other cultural and educational institutions, critics, artists, etc.) is growing strong. On behalf of the "universal" values of art, committed art becomes the aesthetics of politics, which leads to the production of fact materials in the Fascist sense. Art as the aesthetics of politics is a projection of etatistic-administrative as well as of technocratic-liberal conformism: the total opposite of the Marxist understanding of art which includes the politicization of art.

Our work must not turn into an apology of the artistic status quo, of our complete cultural alienation, we must not rejuvenate the blood of the conservative and dogmatic, socially dangerous establishment, which holds the common cultural values of people in the hands of a few, which has the monopoly over the art market over artistic production and,

what is most significant, over the source of information and education, all this in order to reproduce its own parasitic life. The artists should cease their passivity, which prolongs the parasitic life of their bloodsuckers. They should cease to support the class enemy of the proletariat, in order not to produce such works as demanded and "arranged" by the bureaucracy, its power of decision-making, distribution of awards, purchase policy, organization of exhibitions, financing of culture, scholarships, and so on. We, the artists, should seriously reexamine our allies, our interests, our work, our role and our real social position. All those artists who are disinterested regarding the existing sociability, who care only for themselves, belong either to the category of the bureaucracy or petite bourgeoisie, which form the socio-psychological basis for development of the usurpation of power, mastery over man and plundering of man.

The contradiction lies in the fact that new artistic suppositions become known to the public only if they correspond with the system of the artistic bureaucracy. It is unlikely that there would have been any "excitement" at the appearance of a "new art" in our cultural public, if these works and activities were outside the control of the system of artistic bureaucracy. Only an established public opinion can negate the bureaucracy, or rather, the mystery of bureaucracy. That is why the bureaucracy is most interested in preserving the information monopoly and control of all means of public communication, because it is one of the essential conditions for the usurpation of power and self-reproduction. Thus bureaucracy ignores indefinitely the real state of affairs, the real reality, in favour of bureaucratic reality, by spreading misinformation instead of information. Misinformation is more dangerous than information that has not been conveyed. The remaking of history has proved to be a successful method of oppression, of killing new theses and the new artistic alternatives, which are critical towards hitherto existing art practice.

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\*Conformism means nothing but "sociability," but it is better to employ the very term "conformism" in order to anger the fools.

(Antonio Gramsci)

Beograd, 1975.



# Braco Dimitrijević

PARIS 1971 Casual passer-by I met at 11:09 AM







NAPLES 1971  
Casual passer-by I met at 5:17 p.m.





# Marina Abramović

## DIRECTION

There are some objects on the table You may use on me. I am an object.







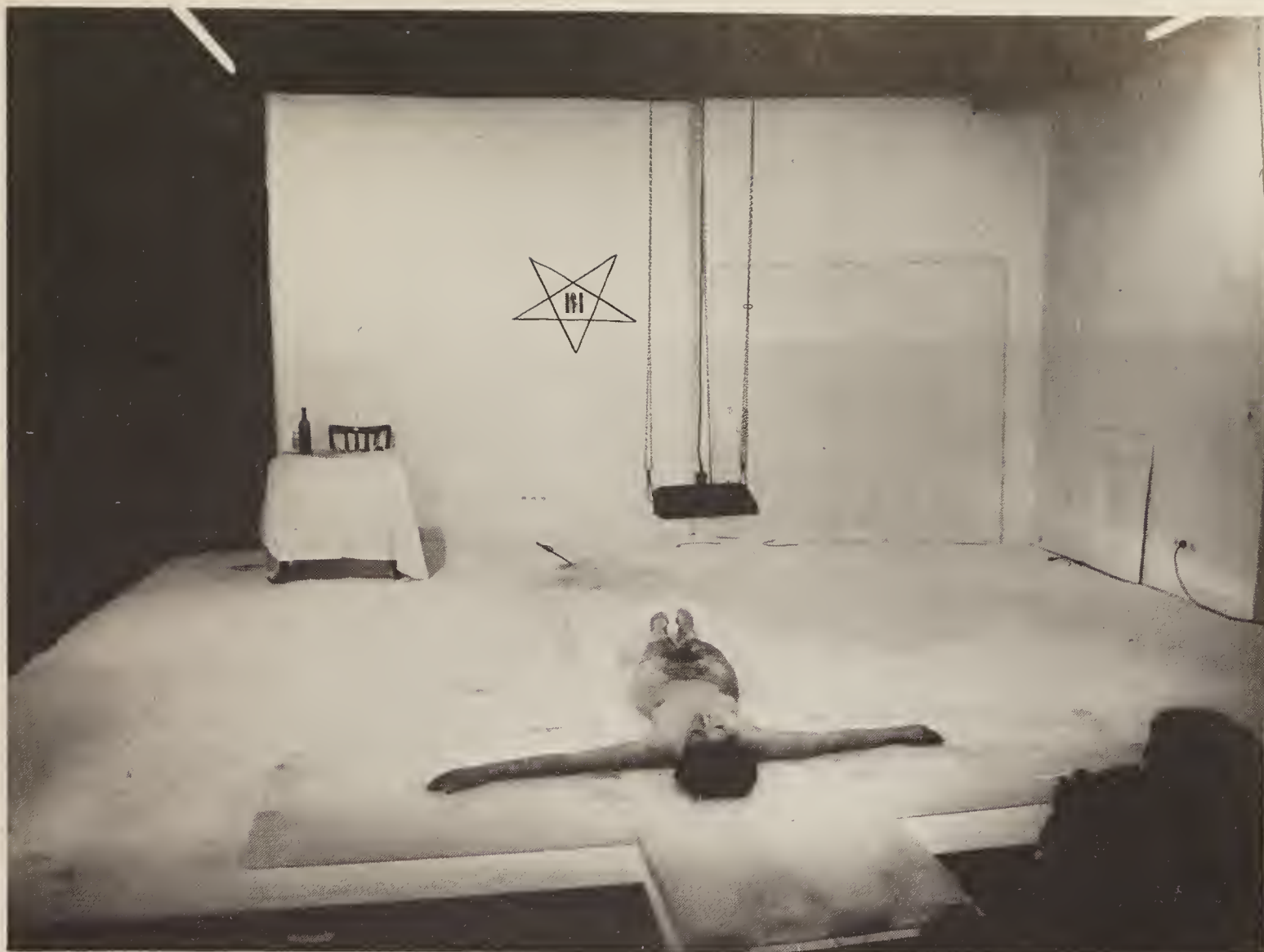
In a space surrounded with white walls I put a piece of white paper onto the floor.

I light the space with 8 spots—each of 8 kw in power. Performance is filmed with 2 static cameras of super 8 mm. One is placed from me towards the audience and the other is placed from the audience towards me.

During this performance I use my body exclusively as a mean, with intention to demonstrate the psycho-physiological reactions upon taking the special pills (pills used during medical treatment against acute schizophrenia). They affect my body and cause a completely unpredictable situation.

During the performance, turned to the audience I am taking two pills. I take the first one,—I am waiting to see the reaction, then in the pause, I turn on the radio and listen to any program that is on, until I make myself ready to take a second pill. When the reaction from the second pill is finished, the performance is completed.

ZAGREB 1974

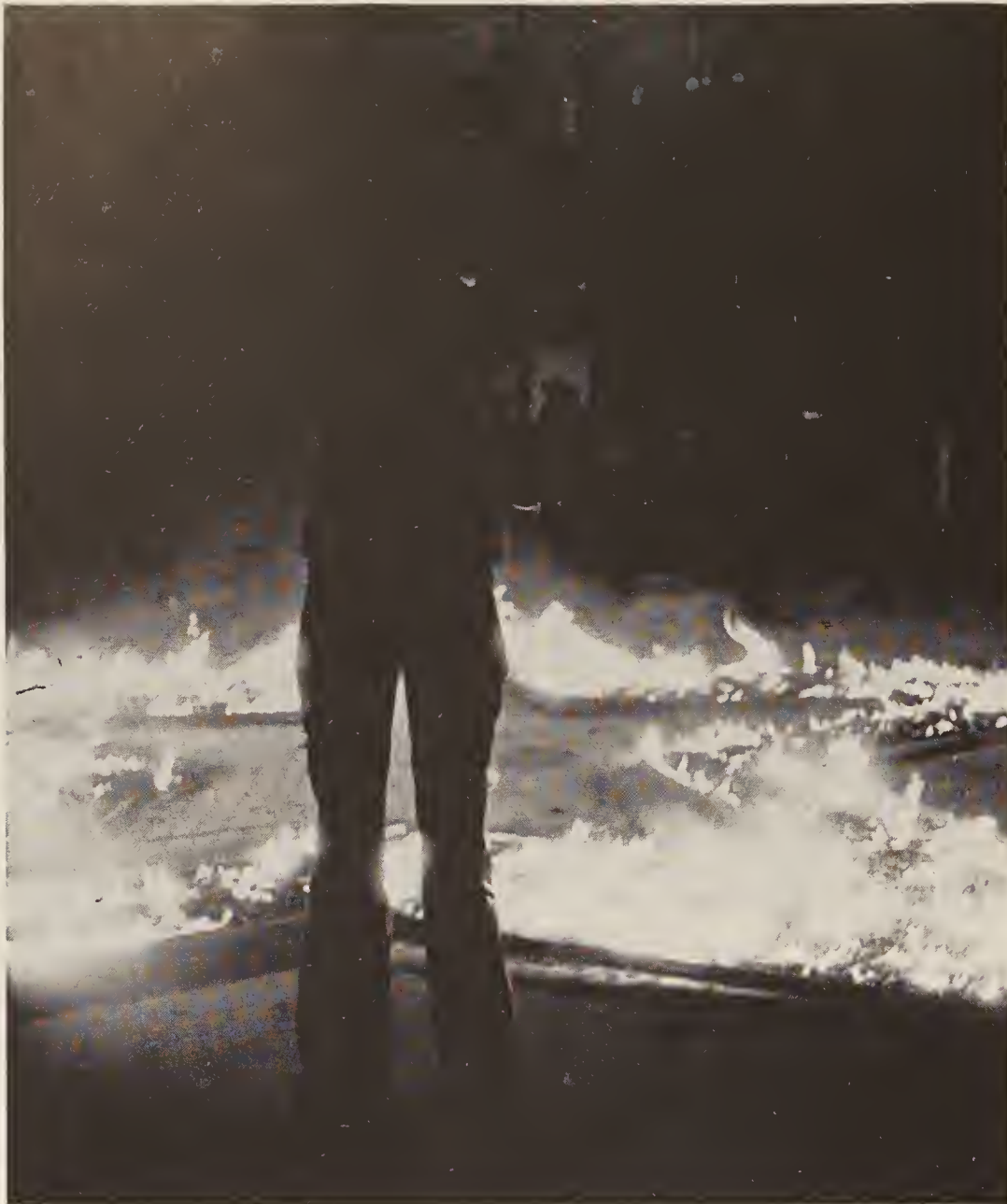


### Performance "THOMAS LIPS"

#### CONTENT OF THE ACTION

1. I set at the table
2. I break the wineglass
3. I eat honey
4. I drink red wine
5. I stand up from the table
6. I draw a pentagram around the photo of Thomas Lips, on the wall
7. I slit a pentagram around my navel with a razor blade
8. I kneel in front of the pentagram on the wall
9. I whip myself
10. I lie down on a cross of ice on the floor
11. A heater 20 cm above my body warms the pentagram on my belly





#### CONTENT OF THE ACTION

1. Placing down the five-pointed star
2. Lighting the fire (star)
3. Circling the star
4. Cutting of the hair and tossing it into the fire
7. Entering the five-pointed star.
8. Becoming one with the star.

Beograd, 1974

# Raša Todosijević

The work I called «Drinking of water — inversions, imitations and contrasts», I realized on April 19, 1974 in cooperation with Marinela Koželj in the Students Cultural Center Gallery in Belgrade.

The work lasted 35 minutes. During that period I drank 26 glasses of water. Before the beginning, I threw, from the previously prepared aquarium, a kilo and 200 gr. fish in front of the public. I was drinking water, trying to harmonize the rhythm of swallowing with the rhythm of the fish breathing, while I kept it on dry all the time.

Naturally, I was able to do that just for a few moments, because later on I had establish my proper rhythm of swallowing of water.

Due to the high quantity of water in my body, I had to throw it up on the table in front of me.

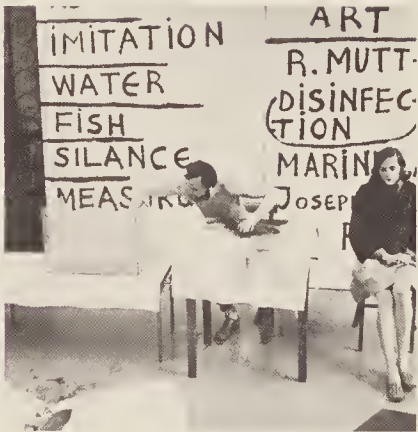
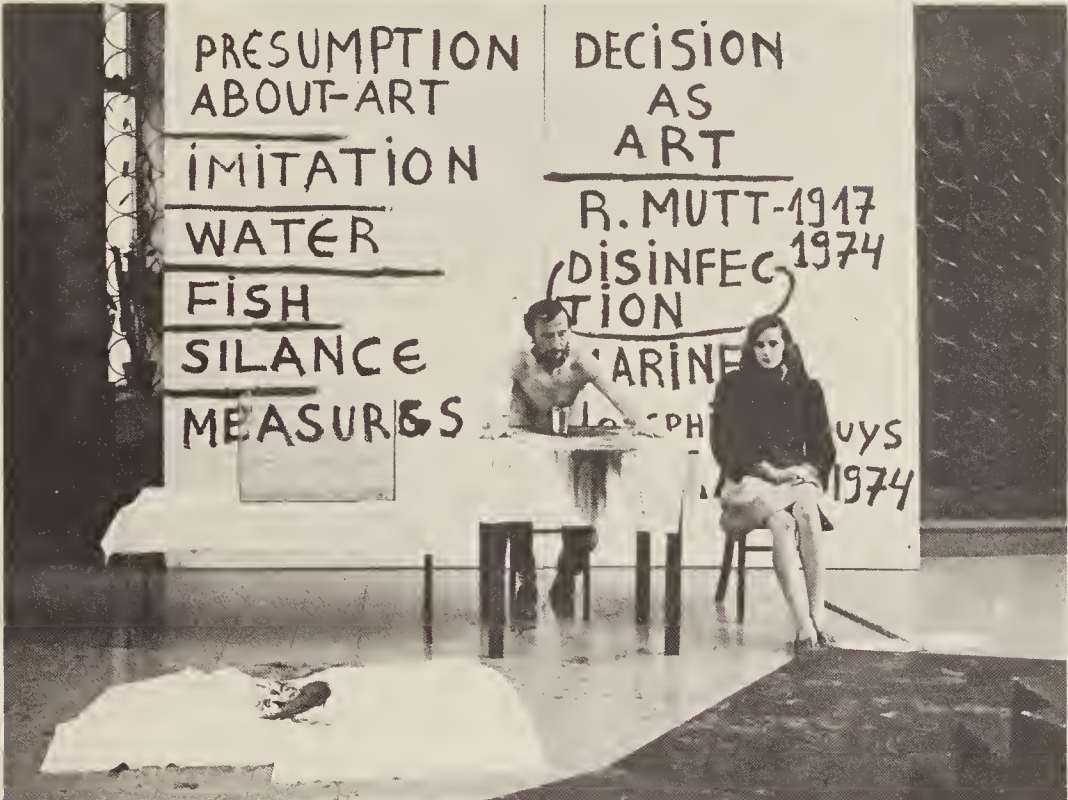
In order to determine the duration of the whole work, I poured the violet pigment powder easily dissoluble in water, under the white tablecloth, table was covered with. I thought that in the moment the cloth was completely soaked by that violet colour, due to the powder water. I would stop my work.

It was very cold in the hall where my work was performed, so before the beginning I suggested to the girl, my collaborator, who was sitting by my side, to put on something very warm in order to intensify in the spectators' minds the sense of contrast between my half-naked body and the warm clothes she was dressed in.

I began and completed the work in a series of inversions and essential contrasts and it was *artificial*, intellectually organized demonstration of my idea.

Not even one physical element, colour, relations, organism conditions or mental sensations in my work, do not have descriptive, symbolic, metaphoric or ritual character. The physical reality of the fish I left on dry and its breathing equalize with my conscious and forcible swallowing of water. I have not had any intention to describe a state of facts or some nature relation, but to show by means of thought-out inversion, or simple act and define the artistic gesture — the art.

Belgrade, April 28, 1974.





THE AUTHOR WROTE THIS TEXT IN ORDER TO PROFIT FROM THE GOOD AND BAD IN ART!

WHO MAKES A PROFIT ON ART,  
AND WHO GAINS FROM IT HONESTLY?

#### THE EDINBURGH STATEMENT

The factories which produce materials are necessary to artists.

The firms which sell materials are necessary to artists.

Their workers, clerks, sales personnel, agents, etc. . . .

The firms or private business owners who provide the equipment or decorate the work of artists.

The carpenters who make frames, wooden structural supports, etc. . . .

The producers of glass, paper, pencils, paints, tools, etc. . . .

Their workers, clerks, sales personnel, retailers, etc. . . .

The real estate agencies which collect rent for: studios, lofts, living quarters or for the holes where artists live.

Their employers, clerks, etc. . . .

All those producing and selling, either wholesale or retail, everyday items to artists.

All those producing and selling, either wholesale or retail, footwear and clothing to artists.

All those who create and sell, either wholesale or retail, cultural requisites to artists.

All those who produce and sell, either wholesale or retail: drugs, sanitary supplies, alcohol, contraceptives, cigarettes and sporting goods to artists.

All those collecting taxes on artists' incomes.

Municipal clerks, tax clerks and other administrative personnel.

The banks with their higher and lower-ranking staff members.

Small craftsmen: tinsmiths, doctors, framemakers, shoemakers, gravediggers.

Professional mosaic craftsmen who execute someone else's mosaics.

Professional casters who cast someone else's sculptures.

Professional chisellers who chisel out someone's sculptures.

Modelers and experts in plaster, wax, marble and bronze.

Goldsmiths.

Signet makers.

Zincographers.

Professional executors of high-circulation prints: lithographic, etching, aquatint, silkscreen, woodcuts, etc. . . .

Medalists.

Stonecutters.

The galleries.

Sales galleries and their staff.

Non-profit galleries.

Gallery owners, gallery administration, gallery curators and their personal secretaries and friends.

The subsidized gallery council.

The voluntary gallery councils which collect money because they are not paid.

Purchasing commissions, their members and consultants.

Extremely well-trained conference experts having both good and bad intentions concerning art.

Managers, retailers, dealers and all other small-time or big-time art profiteers.

The organizers of public or partially public auctions.



The collectors.

Those shrewd profitmakers who profit from finer or capital works outside of public collections.

“Anonymous” benefactors.

The well-known and respected benefactors.

The low, higher and highest-ranking personnel of cultural institutions and the organizers of art, cultural and educational programmes.

The staff members involved in the organization of an exhibit.

All administrative employers.

The clerk responsible for writing letters and sending out invitations.

The clerk who orders, issues and accounts for the necessary materials for an exhibit.

The accounting office.

The janitor.

The secretary, secretaries or other persons related with institutions which provide funds for cultural programmes.

All technical personnel.

Professional and non-professional managers.

The designer of the catalogue, of invitations and posters.

The messenger.

The fire inspector.

The critic, writer or other literate individual responsible for writing the preface to the catalogue.

The copyreader who checks the preface, or the artist's texts, or those about the author, included in catalogues.

The typist.

The photographer who shot pictures for the catalogue.

The catalogue publisher.

The catalogue editor.

The printing firm responsible for printing the catalogue and invitations.

The workers who set the print, bind the catalogue and the invitations.

The proofreader.

The administrative personnel of the printing firm.

Those who fix tax rates and collect taxes on catalogue publications.

Those who sign and issue certificates deeming that the catalogue be tax-free.

Postal fees for mailing invitations and catalogues.

Telephone expenses connected with arrangements made for the exhibit.

The electric companies which charge for electric energy spent during the time of the exhibit.

The gallery guard and catalogue, postcard and ticket salesmen.

The cleaning women.

The housepainters.

The individual giving the introductory address at the grand opening of the exhibit.

Outside information service.

The ad department of the daily paper.

The journalist giving a long or short report on the exhibit.

The expert critic giving the exhibit a short review in the daily paper.

The competent editor of the cultural section of the daily paper.

The technical editor of the cultural and all other sections.

The critic or commentator offering a more detailed review of the exhibit.

The publicist who has nothing to do with art but writes about artists, their works and problems in the art world.

The author who scribbles out his lyric images on art for daily, weekly or monthly newspapers, putting them up for sale and thus making public his ignorance or extremely poor knowledge of some particular branches of art.

And all others who regardless of their professional fields either attack or defend the exhibit and the artist through the daily and weekly press.



Cartoonists.

The makers of trickery, epigrams and sophistries related to art and artists.

The television station, its personnel, workers and "artists."

The cameraman who films either the opening of the exhibit or a film report on it.

The worker responsible for the camera lighting.

The lower-ranking associate of the television's cultural programme who covers the story.

His technicians and assistants.

The editor of the television station's cultural section.

The director, stage designer and remaining amateurs.

The commentator or speaker who reads news on the television.

The organizers and television hosts for cultural shows.

The organizer and host of television interviews made with the artist.

Those who write, direct or film either brief or long TV films and plays about the lives of either living or dead artists.

Those who make films about artists as tourist ads.

Those who film full-length romanticized biographies of artists.

Radio stations, their personnel, workers and other associates.

The advertisement page.

News reports and information spots.

The gossip column.

Radio programme writers who write about artists and those reading or reciting this material.

The speaker and radio programme host.

The organizers of various interviews and shows dealing with either culture or art.

Writers of radio necrological announcements concerning the artist or some artistic movement.

All associates and other radio staff members.

Publishing houses, their staffs, workers and consultants.

Bulletins and the editors of these bulletins on art.

Weekly art magazines and the staff which writes for the magazine, as well as those staff members responsible for the distribution of the magazine.

Monthly, quarterly or bi-monthly magazines dealing with culture and art.

Monographers, biographers and editors of collected essays dealing with a particular artist and his works of art.

Those recording anecdotes from the artist's life.

Those assisting the artist in writing his autobiography.

Those who verbally retell anecdotes and jokes from the artist's life, in this way earning: cigarettes, coffee, beer or brandy or cognac or wine or food, etc. . . .

The critics of all fields, ages and trends.

The bookstores which sell the books, magazines, reproductions and original prints created by the artist and by the non-artist.

Antique shops, antique dealers, private sellers, agents and retailers.

Traveling salesmen and transport companies.

The collectors.

Second-hand stores and second-hand dealers.

Commission stores.

Those experts selling their knowledge and familiarity with the artist's earlier works.

Experts familiar with his later works.

Experts for pre-historic art, primitive art, modern art, etc. . . .

Experts for a particular century or a particular epoch.

The organizers of one particular artist's one man show.

The organizers of group exhibits cultural manifestations, presentations, etc. . . .



The organizers of exhibits which take place between cities or republics.

The organizers of international exhibits.

The organizers of mammoth exhibits: from ancient times through to the present day.

All their commissioners, secretaries, associates, assistants, consultants, proof-readers, publishers, administrative and technical personnel, workers and so forth . . .

The juries, consultants, experts and cafe hostesses.

The conservators, restorers, technicians, etc. . . .

Institute directors, museum directors, museum curators, clerks and other staff members.

The insurance companies and their personnel.

The night guards of museums, galleries, collections and this and that type of compilation or legacy.

The organizers of symposiums, meetings and art festivals.

The organizers of seminars and brief or crash courses in art.

The organizers of organized profit-making on art.

Their ideological, administrative and technical personnel.

Tourist organizations, agencies and their personnel.

Airline companies, bus lines, railroads, etc. . . .

Hotel chains, cafes, waiters, restaurants, boarding houses, etc. . . .

Professional guides with knowledge of one or more foreign languages.

Fans.

Teeny-boppers.

Models.

Married women.

Wives.

Mistresses.

Girlfriends.

Widows.

Children.

Old friends and acquaintances.

Relatives and all other closer or further removed heirs.

Lawyers.

Housewives and mothers who occasionally preach nonsense through the press in support of and against art.

Shrewd overseers and the trustees of legacies, inheritances and collections.

The overseers of art funds left to be distributed as awards, gifts and scholarships to: rich students, careerists and other assorted thieves.

The organizers of funds and scholarships given as one-month or one-year or one hundred-year scholarships to lackeys, bootlickers, wealthier children and to solid epigones.

Organizers granting scholarships for study abroad which are usually granted to the children of higher government officials, to the children of distinguished bankers and to the children of masked and hidden bourgeoisie in socialism.

The organizers of various associations and the required technical and administrative personnel.

And all other lower, higher and highest-ranking bureaucrats squeezing money out of artists with a smile, proud of their “holy mission” in art and in culture.

The poster makers, graphic editors and designers who slyly steal from the artist.

Industrial designers of all kinds.

Anti-designers.

Producers and sellers of: handbills, posters and portfolios with signatures or for cheaper without them.

The producers and sellers of “record as art work,” full of hope and loaded down with dreams of large sums of money.

Those who earn or hope to earn from additional publications (reprint), the



DADA movement, Fluxus and so forth, though they didn't even dream of doing this when it was truly necessary for the artist.

Souvenir producers and their sales people.

Producers of postcards, greeting cards and reproductions of works of art and junk art.

Acclaimed and unacclaimed copyists of art pieces.

The secret forgers of works of art.

Wall decorators.

Facade makers.

Tapestry makers.

Tradesmen dealing in candy, sweets, stockings, tobacco and all other products, reproducing a work of art on its wrapping, thus necessarily making an earning on it.

All those using a work of art on stamps, labels, flags, picture books, wall paper and kitchen or bathroom tiles.

The directors of publishing houses who occasionally dispense with their influence in order to make a profit from small trade on "works of art."

Those supporting helpless and senile artists in order to get hold of their inheritance, thus making a gangster-like profit from it.

Exclusive distributors and profiteers on video-tapes, documentary and historical photographs, signatures and authors' napkins.

Those exploiting anonymous artists.

Those abusing occasional by-passers.

Those who are glad to do "this or that."

Imposters making a living by imitating artists.

Serious and self-confident epigones who imitate artists without feeling the least bit guilty, thereby faring better and earning more than the artists themselves.

Counterfeiters of art history who make money on these fakes.

Those favouring a particular style in art due to their own greed and lust for profit.

Those pointing out one artist, or a number of them, or a particular idea, theme or thesis or problem, in order that they might draw attention to themselves and their ideas, thus earning something from it sooner or later.

Art dilettantes and other indoctrinated, calumniated theoreticians joined in secret partnerships, in order to simplify the hunt for profit in art.

Ladies studying art and artists.

The ladies from good families that engage in all kinds of business with artists for the sake of "Art."

Those who support "Street Art" or Protest Art" and thus thrust, sell, advertise and place these ideas on exhibit in the most elitist galleries.

The critics, theoreticians and other quacks engaged in everyday politics so that they might attain a position in the art world and thus ensure themselves a profit from it.

Camouflaged ideologists, demagogues and reactionaries in institutions, schools of higher learning, universities and academies who have a greater interest in power and influence in the art world, than in EDUCATION and CULTURE, which doesn't offer any kind of profit.

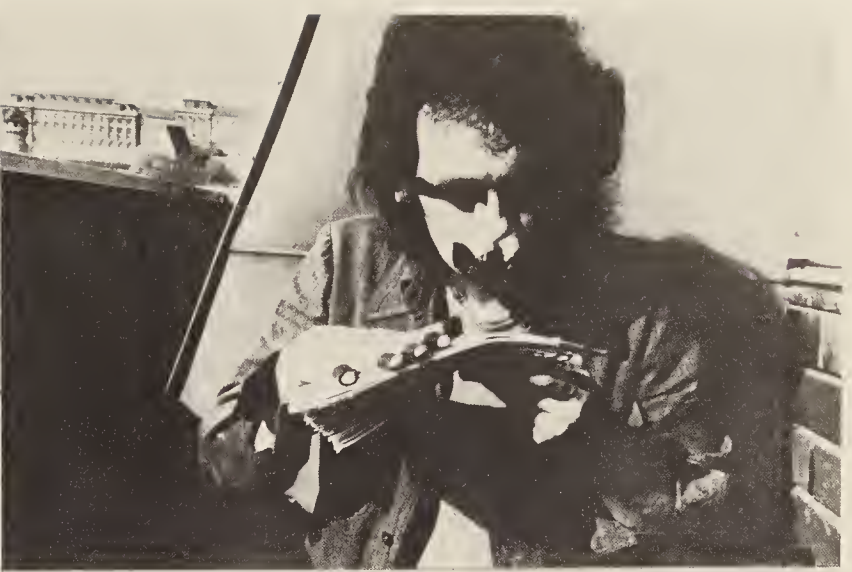
And all those who shade their decadent, dated, reactionary, chauvinist and bourgeois models of art and culture with verbal liberalism, in order that they might attain positions outside of the art world, outside of culture, thus being both above and beyond art and culture.

The psychologists and sociologists who extract nebulous conclusions about art and then start to sell this bluff as a great contribution to the better understanding of art.

Philosophers writing about art, yet never really understanding.

And all the other cheap politicians who have, in this "mysterious" way, through relatives, friends and connections seized at the senecure, brainwashing artists and make enough money for two lifetimes through this nonsensical business.

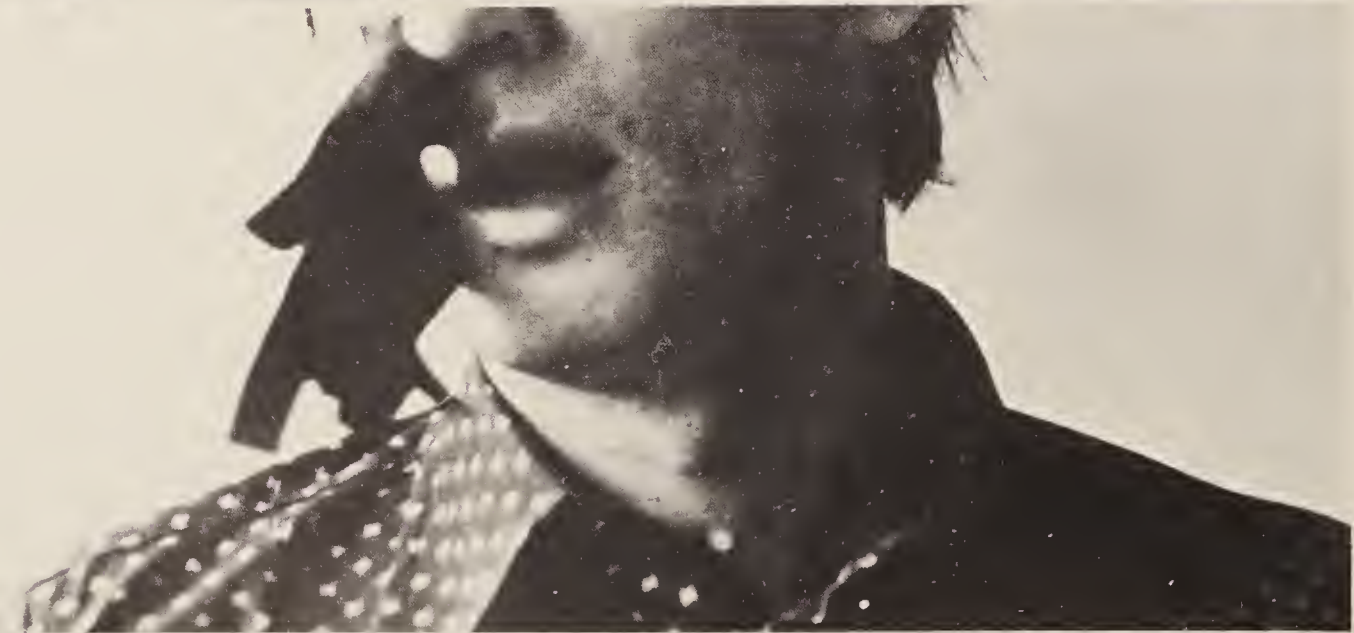
*Todosijevic Rasa*  
Beograd 21.4.1975



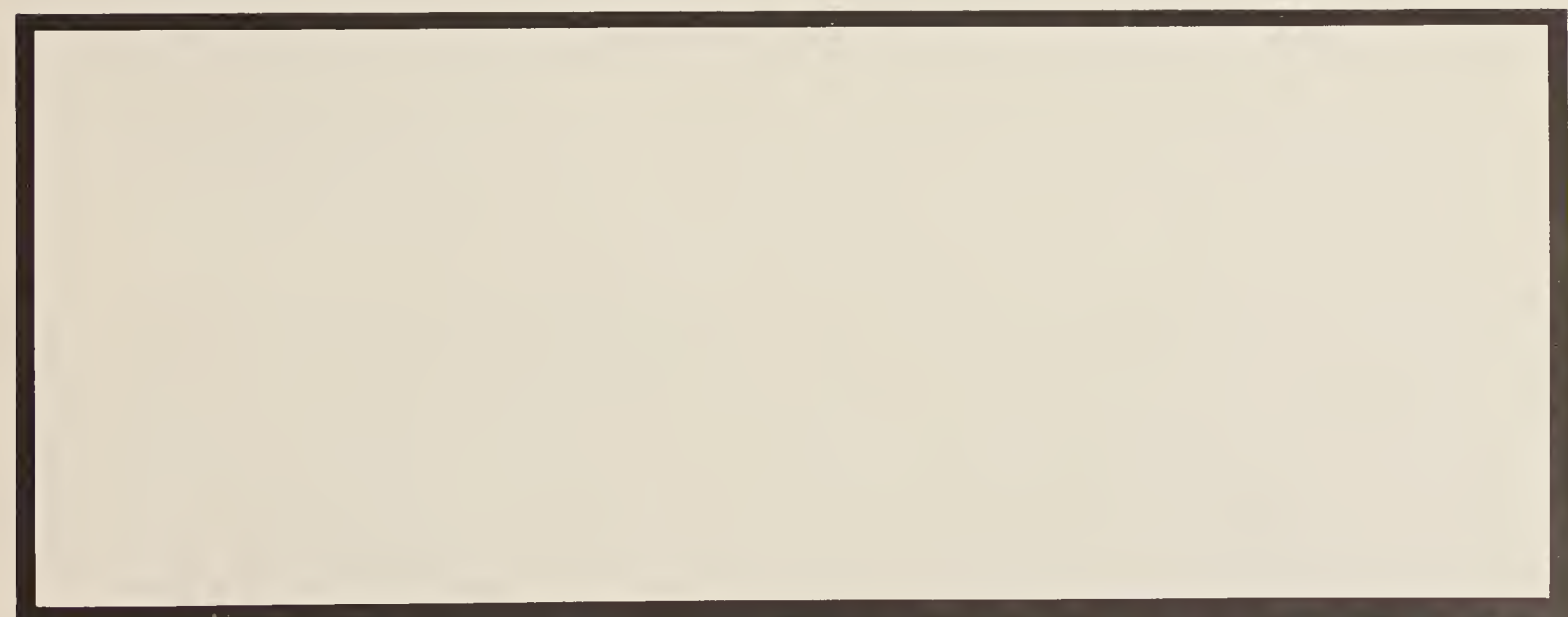
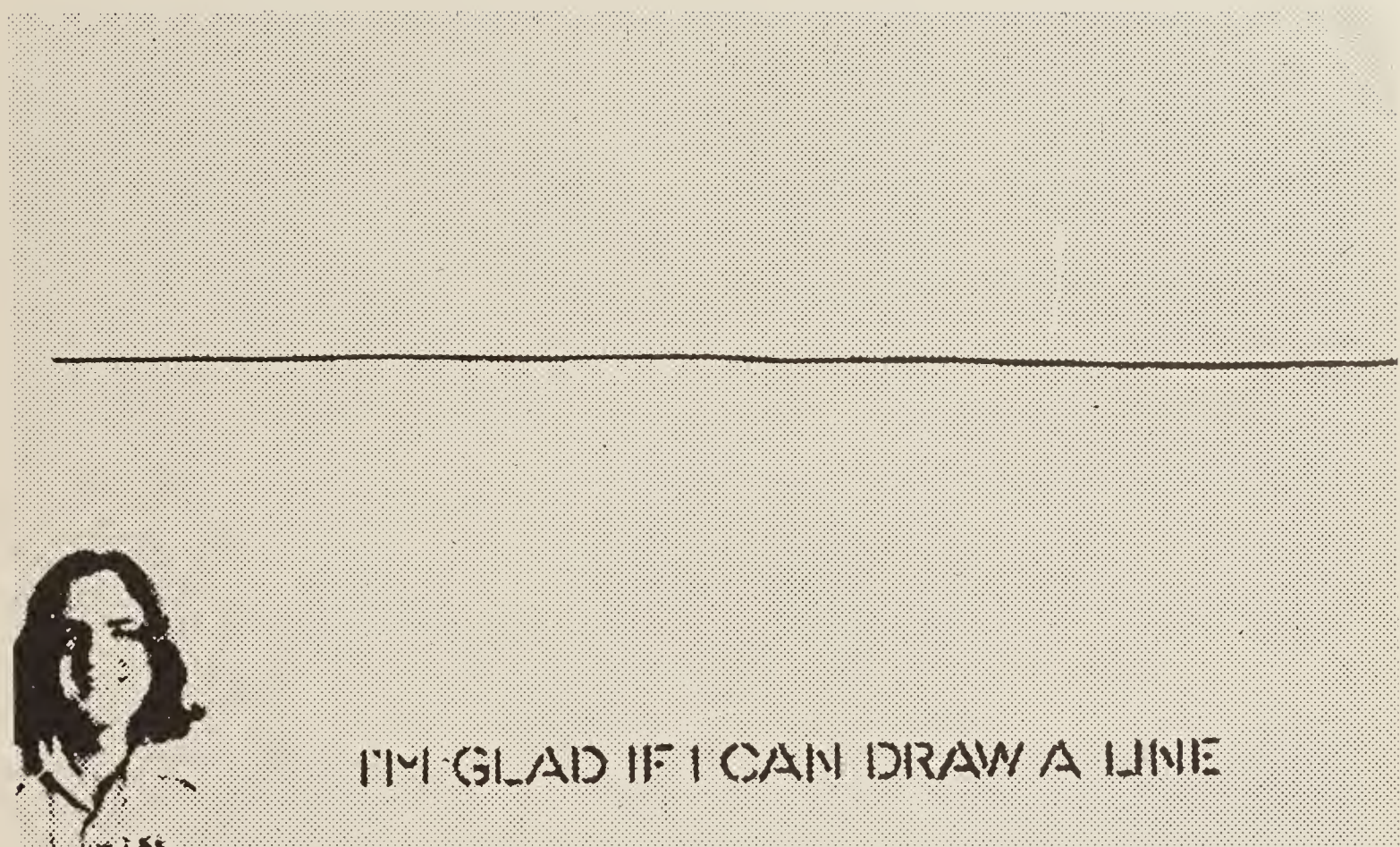
“IN ISOLATION” (When a Man Cannot Give and Get Information)



"WITHOUT AIR"







The woman now faces away from the man, and supports her weight on his thighs. She is kneeling, and is able to make good up and down movements. The man is also able to contribute to the movements. Penetration is quite good, and the position affords excellent stimulation.

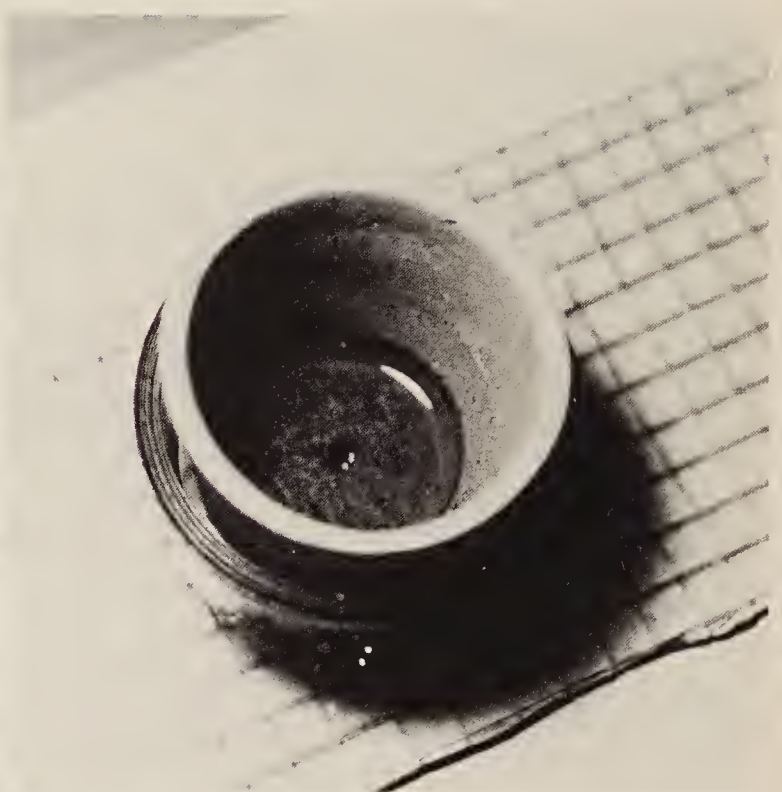
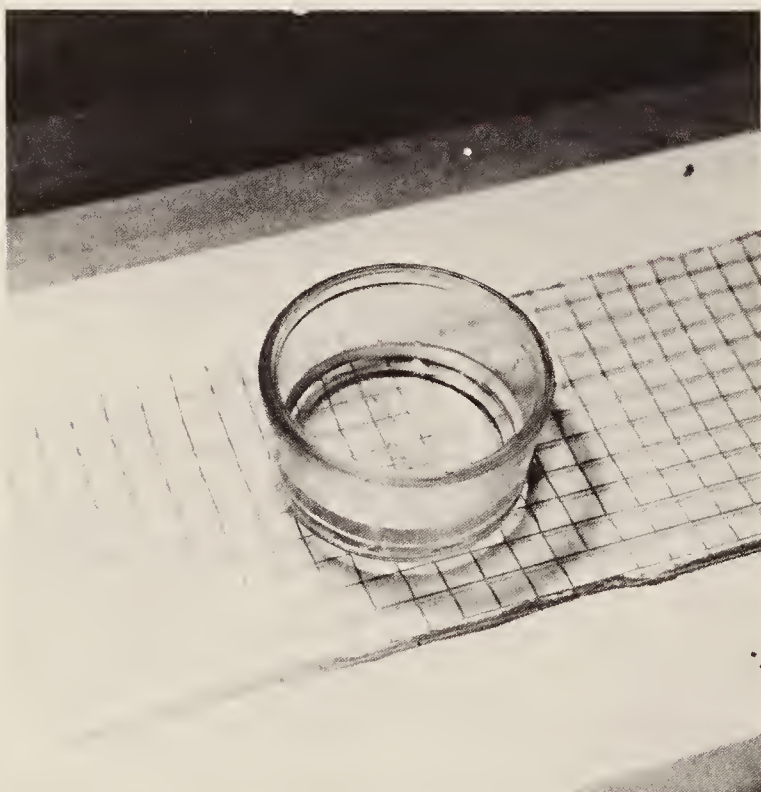


# Visy László

## Description of the experiment:

On 16.9.74 mould was put in a flower-pot, 15-20 grains of wheat on it and again a layer of mould 2 cm thick. This all I covered with a layer of bitumen with 0.7-1 cm thickness. The watering of the flower-pot was made from below. Till now not one single plant broke through the layer of bitumen.

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GRAFTING 1975







PETR STEMBERA  
from the series *Endurance*  
*Tests, Exercise of the*  
*Will and Body* 1972-75

## PETR STEMBERA

*Events, Happenings and Land-Art in Czechoslovakia*  
*A short information*

in: "Revista de Arte"/*The Art Magazine*,  
Universidad de Puerto Rico, Number 7, Dec. 1970

"Thanks" to the unpropitious cultural politics of the country in the fifties, Czechoslovak modern art lagged behind world development for many years. One of the few personalities of Czech artistic life in these years, one unafraid to make experiments, was indubitably Vladimir Boudnik, who, however, still created in the sphere of abstract automatism.

In the early years after World War II Boudnik walked the pavements of Prague in search of crumbling walls, on which he made drawings of fantastic and abstract shapes before the eyes of passers-by. In this way the spectators were drawn into direct contact with artistic creation. In 1949-50 Boudnik only framed the damaged walls with empty frames. He issued endless numbers of manifestations and heaps of other material connected with his experiments, but remained purposely misunderstood by cultural institutions, and was even proclaimed to be mentally retarded. After several years Boudnik gave up these activities and took up the artistic branch of so-called active graphics, the impressions of disrupted sheets of tin onto graphic paper. A number of years later news trickled into Czechoslovakia about the work of the American happeningsmen, in the first place the names of A. Kaprow and the FLUXUS group. Now, after a period of ten years, the influence of A. Kaprow may seem of basic importance in the work of

Milan Knizak, the leader of Czech happening art. We must, however, add that the information that began to come into Czechoslovakia round about 1960 was too incomplete and short to be capable of really influencing and forming anybody. But Knizak himself acknowledges Kaprow as one of the leading personalities of happening art, and he proves this in 1968 with his trip to America, which was actually a trip to see Kaprow.

The AKTUAL group (Milan Knizak, Sona Svecova, the Mach brothers, Robert Wittmann, Jan Trtilek) entered the public eye in 1964, that is to say at a time when non-socialist-realist art activity was already permitted officially in Czechoslovakia. In spite of this, the activities of the AKTUAL group were still looked upon with disfavour, and the members of this group even underwent police persecution at times. Milan Knizak, the spiritual leader of the group, started his public activities by painting abstract pictures and setting together accumulations in the street for passers-by. In the autumn of 1964 Knizak and several members of the group published a *Manifestation of Topical Art*, which is meant to shock, fascinate and seize a person by the very core. Shortly afterwards Knizak and several other members of his group organized their "Topical Walks," "Demonstrations for All the Senses" and other events (shows consisting of things, waste metal, pieces of furniture, etc.). This led to the participation of all concerned in the demonstration, in a common game. This is the way they want to teach the participants of their events how to play, to teach them a different relationship to life and to the world. One of their happenings (in May 1965) ended with the symbolic "burning a virgin at the stake," where Sona Svecova



took the participants into a park and there stripped, placing the different parts of her clothing on the burning stake.

In early 1966 they realized a "Topical Event for One House—in Prague, Dejvice. They sent the inhabitants of this house—chosen quite at random—large numbers of bulky parcels with various practical and impractical things—china and other kitchenware, old letters, rags, books, etc. On the day the parcels were delivered they secretly decorated the various floors of the apartment building with a made-up camp bed, a colourfully painted chair, a live carp, etc. Robert Wittmann joined the Aktuals in the autumn of 1965. His best known project was the "Exhibition of Street Reality," in which they hung a little street in the Mala Strana (Lesser Town) district of Prague with empty picture frames in such a way as to present scenes from life itself, the looks of the town, its walls, pedestrian arcades, etc. A similar atmosphere was achieved in his "Panel," where he placed a panel with a view-square cut out on the busy crossroads on Jungmann Square in Prague, through which many spectators were able to view the life of the city. Also well known are his "Landscape frames" from the same period.

The beginnings of similar activity in Slovakia can be dated to 1965, when Stanislav Filko and Alex Mlynarcik realized their HAPPSOC in Bratislava. This event included the participation of:

1) women	138,936
2) men	128,727
3) dogs	49,591
4) houses and temporary buildings	18,009
5) balconies	165,236
6) farm houses	22
7) plants (factories, etc.)	525
8) flats	64,725
9) water faucets in flats	40,070
10) water faucets outside	944
11) electric stoves	3,505
12) gas cookers	37,804
13) washing machines	35,060
14) refrigerators	17,534
15) the whole of Bratislava	1
16) the Castle	1
17) the Danube at Bratislava	1
18) street lamps	142,090
19) TV aerials	128,726
20) cemeteries	6
21) tulips	1,000,801
22) theatres	9
23) cinemas, trolley-buses, chimneys, trams, wine-cellar, cars, typewriters, radios, shops, libraries, hospitals, etc.	

Events as they took place:

1) first Bratislava reality	2nd May, 1965
2) second Bratislava reality	34d May, 1965
3) third Bratislava reality	4th May, 1965
4) fourth Bratislava reality	5th May, 1965
5) fifth Bratislava reality	6th May, 1965
6) sixth Bratislava reality	7th May, 1965
7) seventh Bratislava reality	8th May, 1965

Duration: 2nd till 8th May, 1965

In October 1966 Mlynarcik realized the event HAPPSOC III, during which he fixed mirrors into the public lavatories on Hurbanovo nam. in Bratislava and prepared sheets of paper on which he invited people to write their opinions instead of on the walls, opinions on anything and everything.

Eugen Brikcius (born in 1942) from Prague arrived at the subject of happenings from philosophy over absurd literature and theatre. His activities began in 1966, when he organized his street events for chance

passers-by in Prague. At the beginning of the year 1967 he realized a happening at the Hlavek College in Prague which had many elements of the theatre.

Brikcius organized his "Still-Life 1" in May 1967 on Kampa Island in Prague; this was more of an enlivened environment than an actual happening. Participants with full pint glasses of beer filled the street and knelt on the pavements, faces towards the wall. This "beer" environment was finished off with a book-burning session. He repeated the same happening on the same spot a year later, this time with police "collaboration."

On June 21, 1967, Brikcius realized his early project—to enliven the beautiful Baroque terrace-architecture of the Ledeburg Garden in Prague with its high staircase with an event of ritual type. In this happening, which he called "Thanksgiving," the participants brought the "Goddess" who sat on the Baroque arc loaves of bread which they arranged in a pyramid. The event was interrupted by the police, Brikcius was arrested, later brought to court, sentenced and finally released.

Also his other happenings are well known, the "Picnic" on the Castle Steps in Prague and the "Honour to Horsky" in London 1969. Brikcius founded the Presentological Society with Rudolf Nemec in 1968. The first public meeting of this society was realized in a town square in Prague in May 1968, and during this event Rudolf Nemec outlined the shadows of the participants onto an enormous roll of paper that was spread over the whole area of the square. Eva Kmentova (born in 1928) arranged a one-day exhibition in April 1970 in the Prague Spala Gallery—an event called "Footprints." There was a trail of the artist's footprints that led from the entrance to the exhibition hall up onto the first floor (plaster casts), followed by all exhibition participants. In the evening the artist gave the footprints away.

Zorka Saglova arranged her first event in the summer of 1969—together with a group of friends she threw a great number of balls onto the water of the Pruhonice pond near Prague, thus creating a sort of floating sculpture.

In the autumn of 1969 Saglova placed mounds of hay and straw in the Spala Art Gallery in Prague, with which the spectators could play according to their own wishes.

Her third large event was "Homage a Gustav Obermann" near Humpolec in Bohemia, where she lighted 19 great bonfires on a snow-bound plain.

Vaclav Cigler, originally a glass designer, makes projects of high metal columns which he sets into the countryside, with crevices through which light is to stream, and he is also taken up with the thought of painting part of the landscape with transparent paint.

The constructivist sculptor Hugo Demartini creates his "Structures in Space and Time" by throwing skewers and bits of paper into the air for a moment.

Petr Stembera stretches out sheets of polyethylene between trees in a snow-covered landscape, and stretches out textile ribbons in a single colour, paints rocks, etc.

This article is only a summary of the given tendencies, without any efforts at achieving a complete review. We have but a small choice of information at our disposal about the present-day activities of the indubitable leader of Czechoslovak happenings, Knizak, for example, as he has been living in New York since 1968. But even so this review may serve as brief information on these tendencies in Czechoslovakia.



# Jan Mlčoch



"I analyzed a cabbage by means of my right leg's toes."

"I washed my body and my hair in presence of my friends."







“THE WASTE PAPER”



“THE TOUCH”





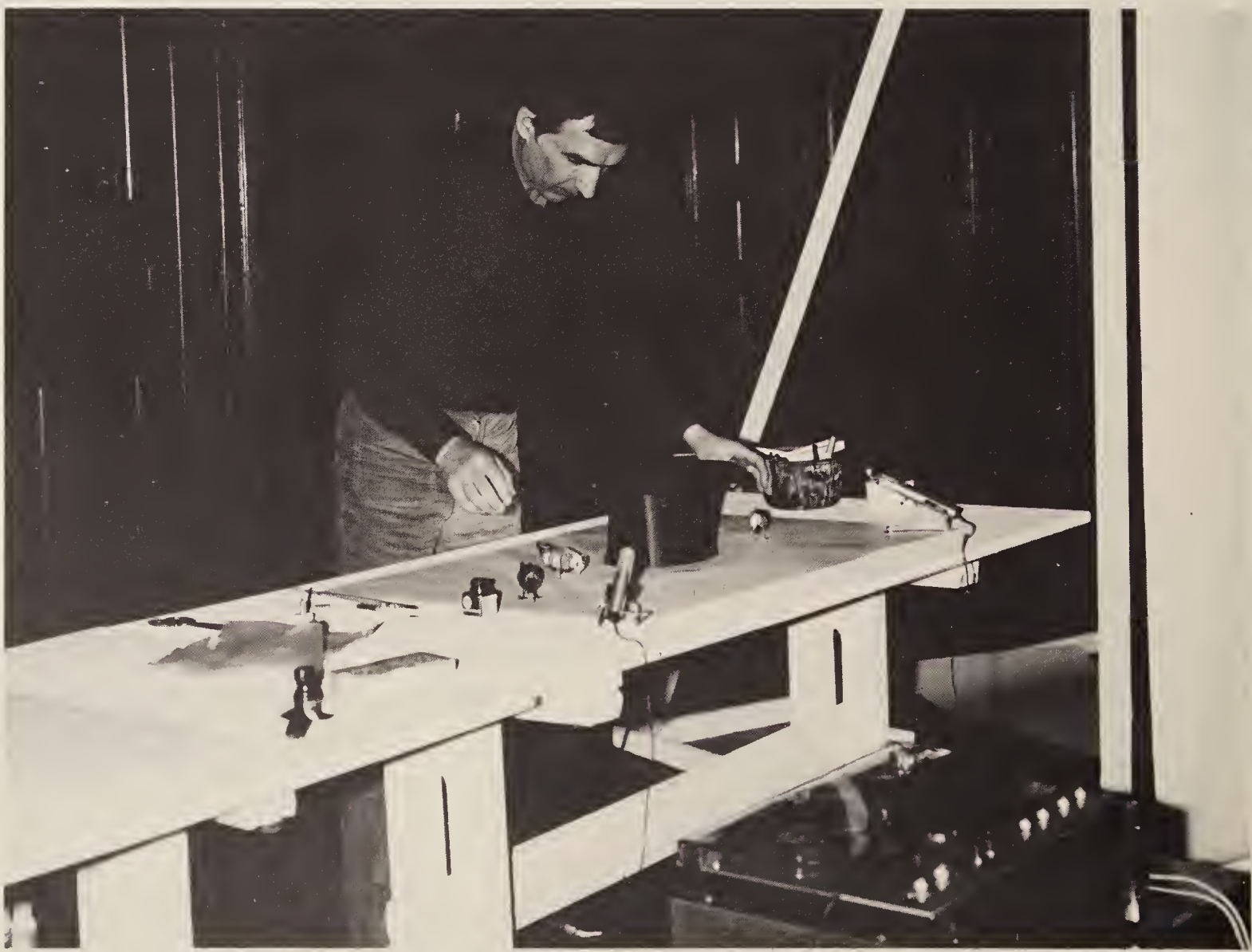


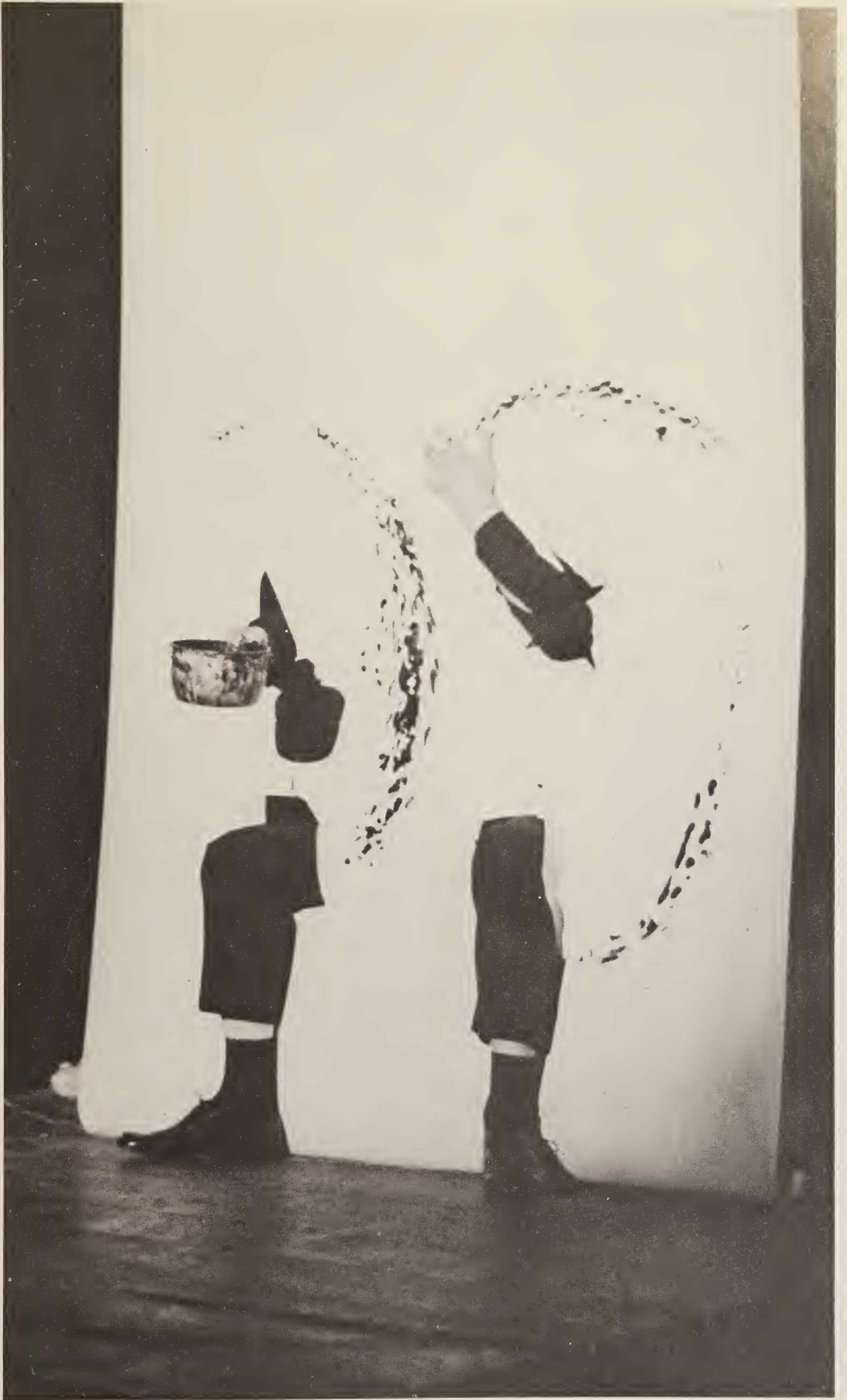
"DISCOVERING OF A RIVER"



Milan Grygar

"HOMAGE TO MAGIC" 1974





"TACTILE DRAWING" 1973



from a catalogue "JOURNAL IMPERSONNEL 1968-1972"





Peter Bartoš

1969  
Bird is flying away, Bartos will be staying down







, . . . a few people are busy around a large trunk. They are wrapping it tight in layers of linen and paper. They are in a hurry, They are looking around with anxiety. They are undoing some strings with much pains . . . They give orders to each other in a low voice. They act furtively and without anybody's permission. They try to realize their aim, taking advantage of the general carelessness. To protect the trunk. . . . To make fail any attempts at reaching its contents. . . . They succeed in packing it and stamp it with warnings, instructions, mail symbols: Attention. Fragile. Ostroznie. Gora. Don't bend. By boat. The Address: GALLERIA FOKSAL PSP—Warszawa . . . The rumour goes among the public that

the trunk contains a collection of the Gallery's important documents: a manuscript of the pedantic chronicle of pseudo-artistic events; applications and responses to applications; longplaying records with speeches; a full file of press items with critical reviews . . . shorthand reports, protocols, photographs and photocopies . . . The crowd around the trunk is growing. At a certain moment it is brought to the very shore of the sea. There it is most carefully put aboard a life boat which quickly sails away sea-bound, with the crowd silently watching. A rocket shot was the sign to throw the trunk into water.

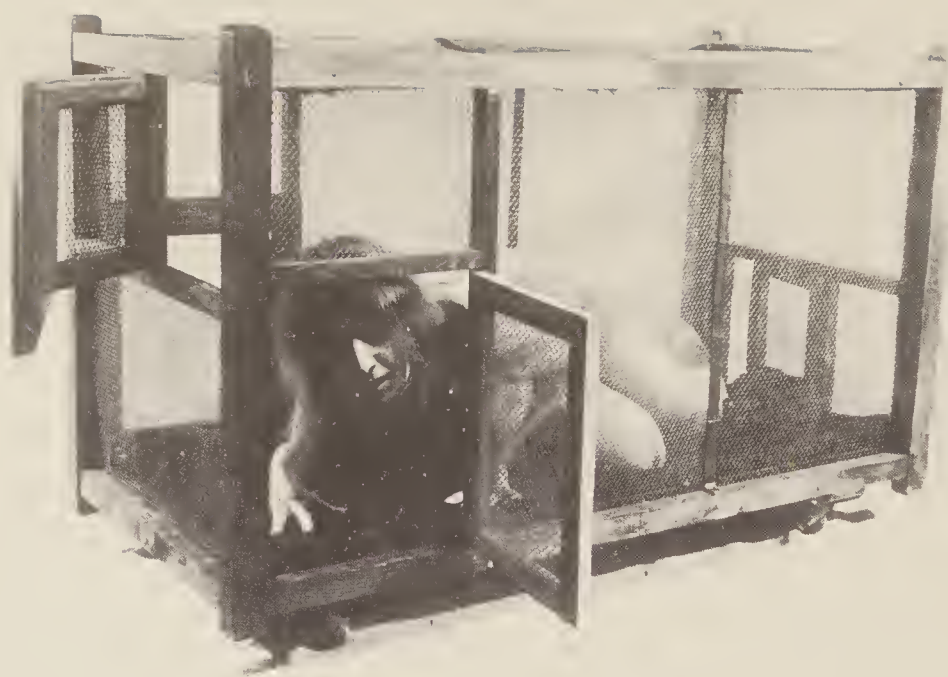
(Tadeusz Kantor—from the Script of the Panoramic Sea Happening, 1967).



The Anatomy Lesson, After Rembrandt











THE SEA CONCERT

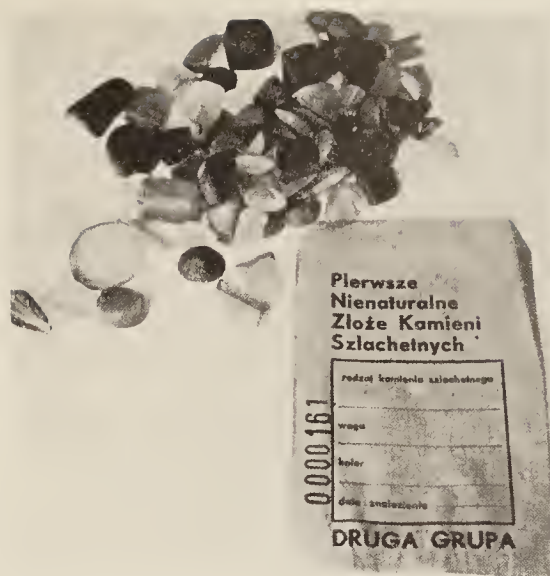


## Druga Grupa

Druga Grupa (second group)  
The first artificial bed of precious stones.







Nazwa mineralu	Beryl	Krystal	Spinel
Skład chemiczny	$\text{Be}_2\text{Al}_2(\text{SiO}_3)_6$	$\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$	$\text{FeO}$
Pochodzenie	syntetyczny	syntetyczny	syntetyczny
Barwa	niebieski	czarny	zielony
Wielkość	7,5 do 8	9	8
Waga			
Temperatura			
Wzrost			

Ważne: Po wykonaniu obrazu należy zgłosić się do punktu





Specially mixed colors by the Druga Grupa. The Druga Grupa reserves the right of authorship for all surfaces covered by this color.



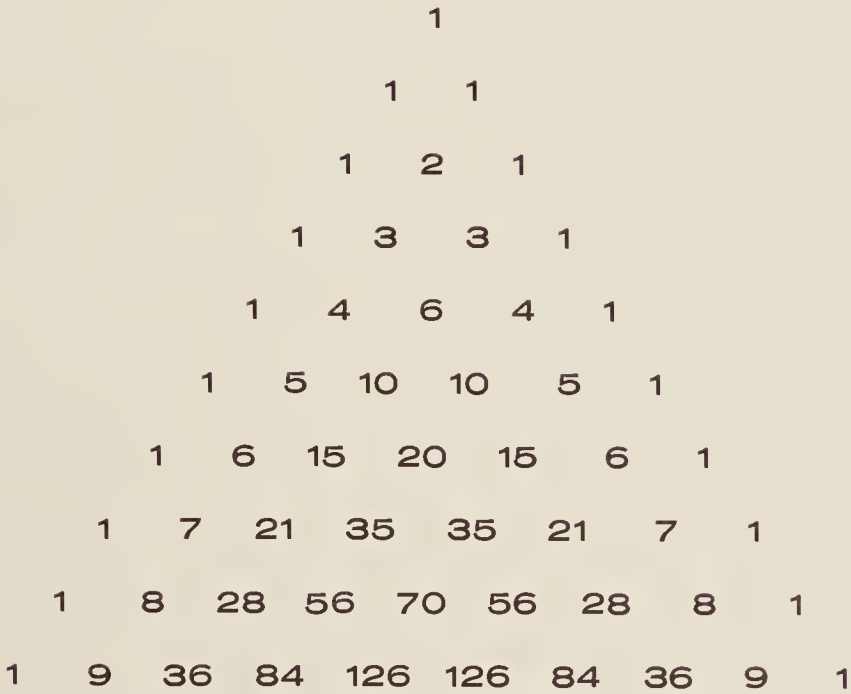


Zbigniew Gostomski

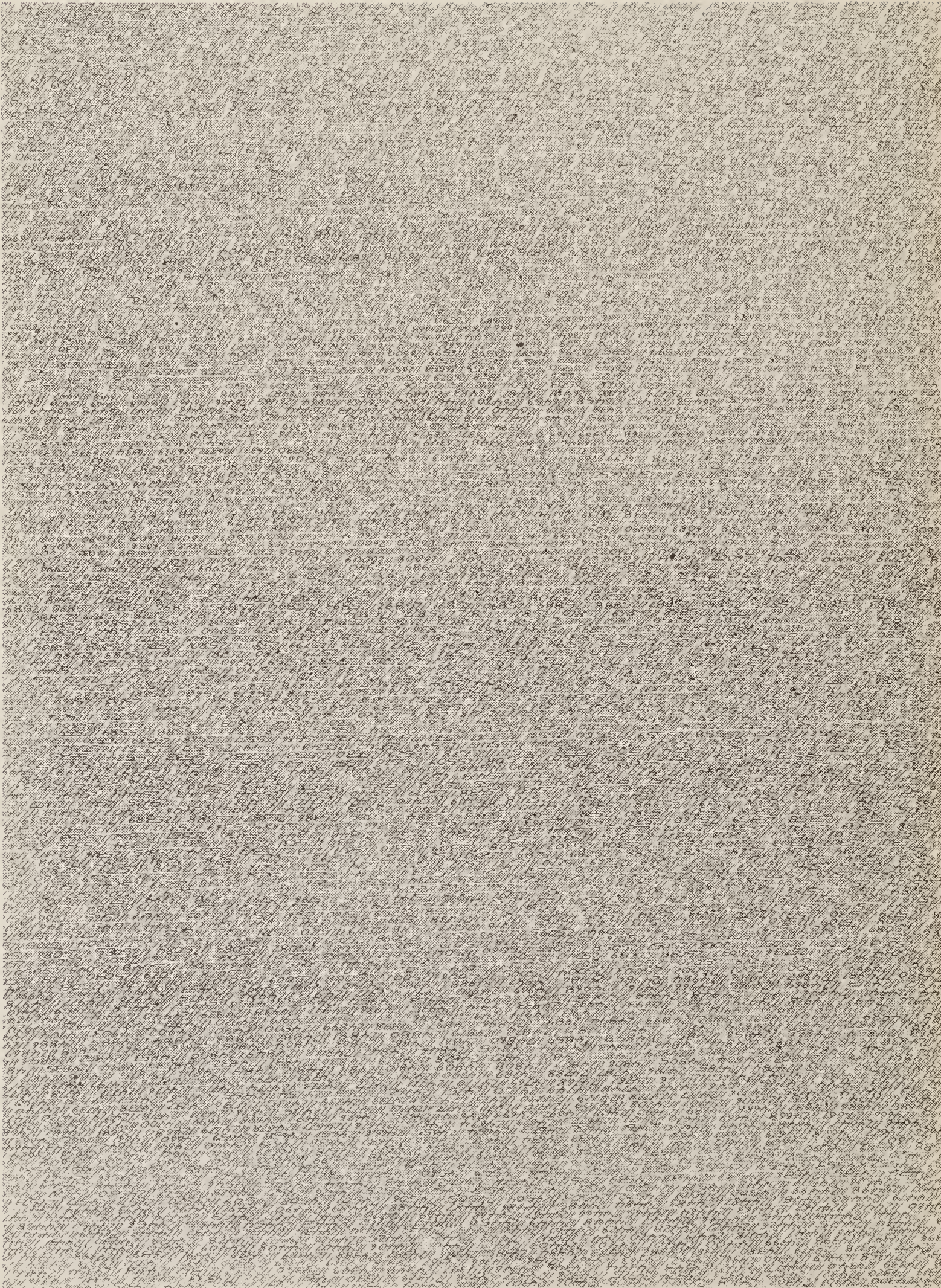
If he had smiled why would he have smiled?

To reflect that each one who enters imagines himself to be the first to enter whereas he is always the last term of a preceding series even if the first term of a succeeding one, each imagining himself to be the first, last, only and alone, whereas he is neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating and repeated to infinity.

James Joyce—*Ulysses*









In my approach, which constitutes a programme for the whole life, the progression of the work documents and defines time. There is only one date—the date of appearance of the first detail of the idea of progressive marking.

Every next detail is an element of one whole. It is marked with the date of appearance of the first detail—1965, opened with the infinity mark, as well as with the first and the last figure of a given detail.

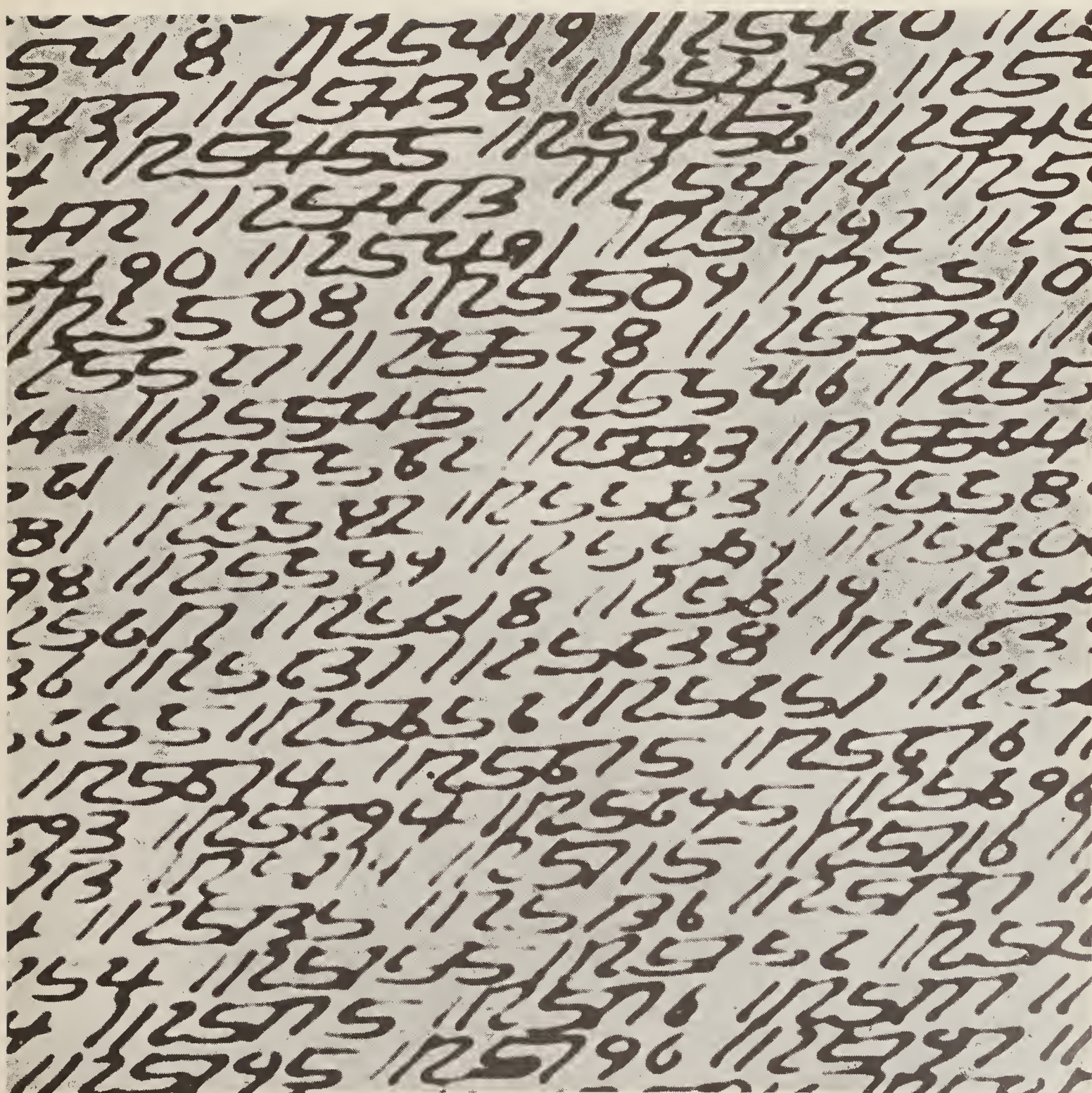
I mark progressively from

one to infinity on identical-in-size details (except the post-cards) by hand, with brush, using white paint against the grey background, provided that the background of each next detail is one percent whiter than the previous background.

This I expect will lead to a moment when all details are marked white on the white.

Each detail is supplemented with a phonetic recording on the recorder tape.

1965/1— $\infty$





**INFORMATION**  
The results of experiments in the field of the monocular and binocular perception constitute the visual material. The perception of space (depth) according to the three-dimensional and geometrically simplified model is possible due to the fact that our visual organ is geminate. The results of experiments in the field of special perception, ontogenetically coded, allow at present to observe the space as more dimensional.

The attached drawings constitute a visual test of the paraspherical perception—when either eye receives different information, the mixing of images takes place in the brains. In this way, the physiological processes are changed into sublime, psychological and mental processes.

Andzej Lachowicz June, 1975

















